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MEDITATIONS

For Every Day in the Month

"Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me: but yet not My will, but Thine be done."—Luke xxii. 42

MEDITATIONS

For Every Day in the Month

Translated from the

"REFLEXIONS CHRETIENNES"

OF

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BY

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PREFACE

It may perhaps seem strange that a book of this kind should find its way from the French, since we have in our own language so many books of the same nature and of recognized merit.

There are certain works, however, which, like the fruit of the vine, grow better with age and ripen only in the autumn of their existence. So it is with the meditations of Father Nepveu.

Published many years ago in the original French, his "Christian Reflections for Every Day in the Year" have met with universal approval. I have chosen from them a series of meditations for every day in the month which are most suited to impress upon the mind and heart the chief truths of our holy religion.

Mental prayer is the foundation of the

interior life. Certain saints have even gone so far as to declare that it is necessary to salvation. However true this may be, it is certain that there can be no spiritual life without it; for mental prayer moves the will to conform itself to God, and excites the affections to love Him.

Mental prayer is difficult, and the temptations which beset it add to its difficulty. Very often we find it absolutely impossible to concentrate the mind on the subject of our meditation. At other times we are prone to believe that the importance of mental prayer has been exaggerated.

Now to combat successfully these temptations we must strive to convince ourselves that mental prayer is the most important business of the day; we must spend a great deal of time in spiritual reading; we must endeavor to draw the proper fruits from what we mistakenly call a bad meditation.

All the various methods of mental prayer can be resolved into these two: the Ignatian and the Sulpician. No comparison, however, can be made between

them; their use is a matter of choice or of vocation. The Sulpician method is, perhaps, more adapted to those who can gain no fruits from the Ignatian method, inasmuch as the former is a perfect work wherever it is broken off, while the fruit of the latter is in its conclusion.

The method adopted by Father Nepveu in his "Christian Reflections" may be called the modified Sulpician method, from the fact that he does not follow out *in toto* the precise order of the Sulpician method.

The aim set forth in this translation will be accomplished if through it only one heart is made to beat with a purer love for Jesus Christ.

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Meditation for the First Day

On the End of Man

First Point. Where were you one hundred years ago? In nothingness. Who has drawn you out of it? God, who, by a preference that you have not at all merited, has created you to His own image and likeness. For what end have you been created? To glorify God, to know and to serve Him, to do His holy will and to keep His commandments. We glorify God by knowing and by loving Him; we give testimony of our love by serving Him; we serve Him by keeping His commandments.

Second Point. God need not have created you, but since He has created you, He must, of necessity, be your first beginning and your last end. Just as it would be impossible for you to be a man without having a body and a soul, so it

would be impossible for you to be a man without having the obligation of serving God. All-powerful as God is, even He cannot dispense with that obligation. True it is that, without releasing you from the obligation, God gives you the freedom of will to observe His law or to transgress it; but how fatal, how pernicious is that freedom, if you do not make use of it according to God's holy will.

THIRD POINT. To serve God, then, is the one thing necessary of which the Saviour speaks. "Porro unum est necessarium." It is not necessary for you to be great, or rich, or learned, but it is necessary for you to serve God. It is not necessary for you to be in this or that state, or to have this or that responsibility, but it is necessary for you to serve God in whatever state you may be. It is not necessary for you to have health, or pleasures, or talents, but it is necessary for you to attribute them all to God, should they be yours. To love and serve God should be the goal of all your ambitions and the end of all your actions. Every one should

live entirely for God. But alas! how many go out of this world without knowing the purpose of their creation, and how many who have known it, have lived as though they knew it not. Are you of this number?

Say often to yourself: Why am I in this world? For what end has God created me? Should I not be ashamed that I have lived up to this time as though I were ignorant of the end of my creation?

"Deum time, et mandata ejus observa; hoc est enim omnis homo" (*Eccles.* xii. 13). Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is all man.

"Libera servitus apud Dominum, ubi non necessitas, sed charitas servit."—St. Augustine. True liberty consists in serving God through love and not through necessity.

Meditation for the Second Day

On Death

First Point. Why should we stand in such fear of death? Our sins, it is true, ought to alarm us; but the thought of the merits of Christ ought to reassure us. Our sins are great in themselves and in their number; but they are finite, while the virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ is infinite. Our evils are great, but the blood of our Saviour is a powerful remedy for all evils. I owe, it is true, ten thousand *talents* to the justice of God; but as great as this debt is, I am not insolvent, since I hold in my hands the price of the blood of Jesus Christ which is of infinite value. I dare say that I pay God more than I owe Him, when I offer Him the precious blood of His divine Son. I know that God will grant me pardon for my crimes when I ask it through the merits of Christ. Since

He has given me His Son, can He refuse me anything?

Second Point. Why should we stand in such fear of death? I should fear indeed the judgment of God; but His mercy ought to reassure me. Is God less merciful than He is just? If His justice terrifies me, His mercy ought to calm my fears. I fear His justice, but I should hope in His mercy, since He Himself teaches me that His "mercy exalteth itself above judgment" (*James* ii. 13). God draws from His own heart the motives of His mercy; He draws from our hearts the motives of His justice. During life we experience the reign of God's mercy, and after death the reign of His justice. If we have recourse to His mercy during life, if we have not a presumptuous confidence in it, we shall have no cause to fear His justice after death. If my salvation depended on the dearest friend that I have in the world, I would rest in peace. Yet what greater friend have I than Jesus Christ who has loved me so much that He has given His life for me?

THIRD POINT. Why should we stand in such fear of death? We have, it is true, terrible enemies arraigned against us; we must repel the assaults of demons whose delight it is to make us companions in their misery. But however violent their rage may be, however redoubtable their efforts, we have, in the Blessed Virgin, a most powerful resource; we have in her heart a refuge where we will be secure from all the wiles of Satan. If Mary is our help, we should no longer fear the power of hell; her name causes the demons to tremble. Can we doubt that she is willing to aid us since she is our mother, and the kindest of all mothers? I am a wretched sinner, it is true, but Mary is the refuge of sinners and the mother of mercy.

When you are troubled by an immoderate fear of death, think of the mercy of God, the merits of Jesus Christ and the tenderness of our blessed Mother.

"Ecce Deus salvator meus; fiduciaciter agam et non timebo" (*Is.* xii. 2). Behold God is my Saviour; I will deal confidently and will not fear.

"Ille desperet, qui tantum peccare potest, quantum Deus bonus est."—St. Augustine. He alone should despair of pardon who believes that his sins can equal the mercy of God.

Meditation for the Third Day

On the Death of the Just

First Point. What a difference between the death of the sinner and the death of the just man! This same difference is found in their lives. The life of the sinner has been sweet and pleasant, but his end is bitter and terrible. The life of the just man has been filled with trials and sacrifices, but his end is sweet and peaceful. That which made up the happiness of the sinner during life is his torment at death, but that which made up the pain and suffering of the just man during life is his happiness and consolation at death. The death of the sinner brings an end to the goods and pleasures of time, and plunges him into the evils and sufferings of eternity. The death of the just man brings an end to the evils and sufferings of time, and bids him enter into the goods

and pleasures of eternity. What a difference between the death of the sinner and the death of the just man. Which death do you choose?

Second Point. The works of the just and of sinners accompany them after their death; but just as their works are very different so their rewards are very different. The works of sinners are their condemnation and punishment; the works of the just are the cause of their justification and recompense. At death, the crucifix is presented both to the sinner and to the just man. The former beholds there his Enemy and his Judge; the latter, his Friend and his Saviour. The one sees in this divine model a visible mark of his reprobation and the source of his despair; the other feels, in his love for his Saviour, and in his conformity with this divine model, a powerful motive of confidence and a pledge of his predestination. Death tears away the one from all that he loves and cherishes, in order to attach him inseparably to all that he hates and fears. Death separates the other from all that he

despises in order to attach him inseparably to all that he loves and hopes for.

Third Point. Which of the two deaths do you choose? Now there is time to choose; at death, it will be too late. Do you not turn away in horror from the death of the sinner? Do you not desire the death of the just man? This desire is unjust if it is not supported by your conduct. Do you desire your death to be precious in the sight of the Lord, and your life edifying to men? Do you desire a sweet and holy death? Live with fervor if you desire to die in the odor of sweetness and sanctity; live in perpetual fear if you desire to die in hope; do, during life, all that you will wish to have done at death, and you will have nothing with which to reproach yourself, nothing which you should fear.

Take the resolution to live the life of the just.

"Timenti Dominum bene erit in extremis" (*Ecclus.* i. 13). With him that feareth the Lord it shall go well in the latter end.

"Disces bene mori, si didiceris bene vivere."—ST. AUGUSTINE. You will know how to die well, when you will have known how to live well.

Meditation for the Fourth Day

On the Death of the Sinner

First Point. What will be the state of the sinner at the hour of his death? What fears! What anxieties! What a contrariety of desires and sentiments. In life he had little faith, but how great will be his faith at death! In life his hope has been presumptuous and unfounded, and at death he can claim only despair as his portion. In life he could have had charity, he could have loved his God, but he was unwilling to do so. He will turn away in disgust from the goods, the pleasures and the creatures which he has preferred to his salvation and his God, but he will not be detached from them. He will be confounded at the thought of his many crimes, but he will not be repentant, or if perchance he should be repentant, it will be a forced repentance that will but add to his affliction and unhappiness. It is the

just penalty, O Lord, which Thou dost impose on the sinner, to make him at variance with himself at death, because he has lived at variance with Thy law and with Thee during life.

SECOND POINT. The sinner will be tormented when he remembers his past sins and his abuse of so many graces. He will be tormented by the thought of all the pleasures which have been so vain, so worthless and so fleeting, and which are soon to drag him down into the abyss of hell. Those pleasures which were his happiness in life, will be his punishment at death. Penance will then be the object of his vain desires, but his heart will be hardened by despair.

THIRD POINT. The sinner's greatest torment will be the fear of what is to come. He knows that in a few hours he will pass from time into eternity. He knows that if he is not in the state of grace, an eternity of punishment awaits him. And not only does he know that he is not in the state of grace, not only does his soul bear witness that he is no longer a child of God

and an heir to the kingdom of heaven, but he feels the visible marks of his reprobation in the multitude and gravity of his crimes, in the hardness of his heart, in the troubles of his conscience, in his distrust in the mercy of God and in his despair which overwhelms him. Thus he finds himself in a frightful state; hell anticipated! into which he is about to fall. Behold then the false and fleeting happiness of the sinner! Which does it arouse in you, envy or horror?

Ask yourself whether you desire to die the death of the sinner. Why then should you live the life of the sinner, since it ends invariably in this horrible death?

"Mors peccatorum pessima" (*Ps.* xxxiii. 22). The death of the wicked is very evil.

"Hac justissima animadvertione punitur peccator, ut moriens obliviscatur sui, qui vivens oblitus est Dei."—St. Augustine. The sinner meets with this most just punishment, that as in life he has been forgetful of God, in death he forgets himself.

Meditation for the Fifth Day

On the Particular Judgment

First Point. The fear of death is intensified by the thought of the judgment that is to follow. You will be examined concerning the sins you have committed, the good you have neglected to do, and the good that you have done amiss. The soul will be separated from the body and will stand before its Judge. It will see its sins no longer in the false light of the senses, but in the light of truth it will see them as God sees them. It will see them as they really are — distinct, individual and clothed with all their circumstances. But what are these circumstances? The abuse of God's manifold graces; the sanctity of the religious or lay state to which God has called it, and which it has profaned; the patience with which God has borne with

its sin, and which it has abused. All these circumstances will augment the sin and terrify the sinner.

Second Point. You will be examined not only concerning the evil you have done, but also concerning the good you have neglected to do. Many will be condemned in the judgment not because of the sins they have committed, but because of the good works they have omitted. But if they have done no evil, why should they be condemned? But again, if they have done no good why should they be recompensed? Does one merit a recompense because one has done nothing? Moreover, is it not a great evil to do nothing for God, since He has done so much, and suffered so much for us? Is it not great evil to do nothing, when God commands us to labor? Is not a slothful servant culpable? Is he justified in doing nothing when he has been hired to serve?

Third Point. You will be examined in the judgment not only concerning the good you have neglected to do, but also concerning the good that you have done

amiss. It is not enough to do good, it is necessary to do it well. For an action to be good, it must lack nothing either in its beginning or in its end. How many actions that appear good in the eyes of men will be found wanting when weighed on the scales of the temple! One circumstance alone, one selfish motive, can corrupt an entire action, and make an action, in itself meritorious, the cause of our condemnation. Holy Job feared even for his holiest actions, because it was God who was to judge them. If so great a saint feared, how can we be so tranquil?

Foresee the severity of the judgment, and examine yourself daily.

"Justitias judicabo (*Ps.* lxxiv. 3). I will judge justices.

"Vae etiam laudabili vitae hominum, si remota misericordia discutias eam."—St. Augustine. Wo to the most virtuous soul, if Thou, O Lord, examine it with rigor.

Meditation for the Sixth Day

On Mortal Sin

First Point. No one would commit sin if he could comprehend it perfectly. To know sin perfectly is to hate it infinitely. But to know sin perfectly one must know God perfectly. The holiness and grandeur of God is the only measure of the malice of sin. As God is the greatest good, so sin is the greatest evil. Moreover God hates sin in the measure that He loves Himself, and the same reasons that oblige God to love Himself, oblige Him to hate sin, because sin is infinitely opposed to Him. Have I not good reasons to love God? Have I not the same reasons to hate sin? How comes it then that I love sin?

Second Point. God's love for Himself is the motive and the measure of His hatred for sin. Just as God loves Himself

with an eternal love, and as He has never for a moment ceased to love Himself, so He hates sin with an eternal hatred, and He has never for a moment ceased to hate it. Just as God loves Himself with a love so necessary that He can no more cease to love Himself than He can cease to be God, so He hates sin with a hatred so necessary that He can no more cease to hate it than He can cease to be God. If God, then, hates sin with such eternal, such necessary, such infinite hatred, how can I love it?

THIRD POINT. What can inspire in God this eternal, necessary and infinite hatred for sin, if not a wrath proportionate to that hatred—an eternal, necessary, and infinite desire for vengeance? What bounds can there be to a wrath that springs from infinite hatred and is supported by an infinite power? And yet we do not fear this hatred, nor de we hate sin, which exposes us to the terrible consequences of an all-powerful wrath. We do not shun sin; we love it and we commit it daily. Oh! what blindness. In truth, do

we not hate ourselves if we do not hate sin, since God hates it infinitely, and since it renders us the object of His hatred and His wrath?

Let us strive then to convince ourselves, that as sin is the only object of God's hatred, so it should be the only object of our hatred. And that we may know better how to hate sin, let us often ask of God the grace to know what sin is, since this is a sure means of hating and avoiding it.

"Odio sunt Deo impius et impietas ejus" (*Wis.* xiv. 9). To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike.

"Parum tibi esset quod esses injustus, nisi eum injustum esse voluisses a quo in te vindicari noluisses."—St. Augustine. The sinner is not satisfied with his own injustice; he would wish that God were also unjust, so that He would not hate and punish him.

Meditation for the Seventh Day

On Avoiding the Occasions of Sin

First Point. Although Satan is a formidable enemy, he is not so powerful as we imagine. He can attack the heart only from without, because it is a sanctuary that he cannot enter unless we permit him. He is invisible, and our most dangerous temptations come from sensible objects. We ourselves furnish him the arms with which he contends against us. He owes his strength to our weakness or rather to our temerity and to the facility with which we enter into the occasions of sin. Let us be less presumptuous, and he will be less powerful.

Second Point. The heart is, as it were, a fort which the devil besieges; but it is a fort which he can capture not so much by force as by strategy. He has at his com-

mand, certain spies which furnish him with information. These spies are our passions which, when excited, delude our reason, weaken our will, and finally deliver us into the hands of the enemy. Hence it is that St. Paul calls the sting of the flesh the envoy or ambassador of Satan, who negotiates with our hearts, and at the first opportunity causes our ruin.

THIRD POINT. We are influenced ordinarily by the objects that surround us: we are good if they are good; we are evil if they are evil. From these objects spring forth our thoughts, from thoughts our desires, from desires our attachments, which make our vices and our virtues. Whether these objects attack us of themselves or merely by their image, they have always great power over our hearts and our spirits. Their impression is always very vivid and lasting. Now what renders their impression so vivid if not the occasions of sin? Let us flee, then, from all occasions of sin, if we truly desire to avoid sin.

Take the resolution to avoid all occa-

sions of sin, especially those that are most dangerous to you.

"Fugite, salvate animas vestras" (*Jer.* xlviii. 6). Flee, and save your lives.

"Maxima providentiae compendia quod victoria fiat per fugam et timorem."—ST. CYPRIAN. God has well ordained that our victory over sin and our salvation should depend on our fear and our flight from the occasions of sin.

Meditation for the Eighth Day

On Venial Sin

First Point. There are few who do not at first abhor wickedness. We do not fall into sin suddenly. Despite the corruption that original sin has left in our hearts, and the disorder it has caused in our souls, there is still left a certain sense of right-living that makes us always condemn great crimes in others, and, by inspiring a certain horror in us, makes us fear to commit these same crimes. But when we become familiar with venial sin, we begin to lose our horror of mortal sin, and court the danger that once we feared. So, little by little, we come to commit mortal sin without reluctance and even with pleasure.

Second Point. Venial sin is not a direct road leading away from our last end; it is rather a byway or circuitous

road. By obliging us to go out of our course, it finally causes us to lose our way. Venial sin is not a breaking away from God, but rather a lukewarmness on our part, which finally leads up to it. In accustoming ourselves to neglect God, as we do by venial sin, we finally come to despise God and His holy law. When our love is strong it does not suddenly turn to hatred; but when our love is weak it easily yields to indifference. One voluntary distraction during prayer appears to be of no account; yet it is often the occasion of an evil thought, a wicked desire, a desire for mortal sin. If you reflect well on this, can you any longer believe that a voluntary distraction during prayer, or, in fact, any venial sin is of so little consequence?

Third Point. However innocent an attachment to a certain object may appear, unless we are very guarded it will gradually become a purely human attachment. God will not be the object of it, and nature alone, not grace, will regulate it. An affection for a creature can easily develop into a natural passion, then into

a sensual passion, and finally into an impure or criminal passion. Since we fall into mortal sin by degrees and almost without being aware that we are falling, how difficult it is when we are on the brink of that precipice, to avoid falling over it! Alas, may I not be in danger of falling over this precipice without being aware of it? Prevent it, O my Saviour; enlighten me, and preserve me from so great a misfortune.

Take the resolution to avoid, as far as possible, every venial sin, since this is a most certain means of avoiding mortal sin.

"Qui spernit modica, paulatim decidet" (*Ecclus.* xix. 1). He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little.

"A minimis incipiunt, qui in maxima proruunt."—St. Bernard. They who have committed great sins have begun by committing small ones.

Meditation for the Ninth Day

On the Presence of God

First Point. God sees me! What a thought for him who comprehends it. How potent it is to restrain our passions, to moderate our desires, to prevent sin, to sustain our courage, to animate our fervor and regulate our conduct. God sees me! He is everywhere present and always attentive to me. He thinks of me always, and I seldom if ever think of Him. I am never attentive to Him and to the workings of His divine grace. God sees me! With what respect, with what modesty, should I not dwell in His presence. The angels are lost in wonder and admiration before His august countenance, and I who am but dust and ashes, I am not even fearful. The presence and the majesty of kings impresses men with so much respect, that even the most insolent are kept in

subjection. And yet the presence and the majesty of the King of kings does not keep me from sin. God sees me! Before His most pure eyes, can I dare do those things which I would be ashamed to do before the eyes of men? Do I dare sin in His presence, knowing that He hates sin with an infinite hatred?

Second Point. God sees me! He sees all the good that I do, and He will reward even my least good action. Would I not be despising so great a Master, and be rendering myself unworthy of so great a recompense, were I to serve Him in a lukewarm manner? God sees me! His all-seeing eye penetrates to the very depths of my heart. He sees all my desires, all my aspirations. He discerns all the motives of my actions. With what purity of intention, then, ought I perform all my actions. God sees me when I am most strongly tempted; He gives me strength for the combat. He shows me the crown of glory so that I may be filled with courage in the contest. Can I have the least doubt then of victory, since I am

upheld by the omnipotence of God? Can I be disheartened by difficulties, when I am certain of a crown of glory if I surmount them?

THIRD POINT. God sees me in my afflictions; He sees all my sufferings, and He even takes into consideration the manner in which I suffer. He is not insensible to my evils, and He is ever ready, when I have recourse to Him, either to deliver me from them—if it be for His glory—or to fortify me so that I may not fall. Why then am I cast down? Why am I discouraged? God sees me! He sees my miseries and the secret groanings of my heart. He sees my desires, hears my prayers, and supplies all my wants. Can I then lack anything, miserable one that I am, provided I do not lack confidence in God?

Recall to yourself often in spirit these words, "God sees me!" since they are an equally sure and easy means of avoiding sin.

"Melius est mihi absque opere incidere in manus vestras, quam peccare in conspectu Domini" (*Dan.* xiii. 23). It is

better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.

"Angelos et angelorum Dominum in lucta quae tibi cum diabolo est spectatores habes."—ST. EPHRAEM. Angels and the Lord of angels, behold us in our strife with the demon.

Meditation for the Tenth Day

On the Dignity of the Christian

First Point. What is a Christian? He is one who has a *particular* relation with God the Father, whose son he becomes by baptism. What Jesus Christ is by nature, the Christian is by adoption, a son of God the Father. He became, through his spiritual regeneration, what The Word is in the eternal generation. "You have received the Spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God" (*Rom.* viii. 15, 16). The birth of Jesus Christ, says St. Augustine, is the model of our rebirth which is brought about by baptism. The one took place in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the other takes place in the womb of the Church. How ungrateful are we then, and how unworthy of the name of Christian, if we live a sinful life!

Second Point. What is a Christian? He is one who has an essential relation with Jesus Christ of whom he is a member. St. Paul says that all Christians form one body, of which Jesus Christ is the head, whose members they become by baptism. "You are the body of Christ, and members of member" (*I Cor.* xii. 27). Our union with Jesus Christ is true, since it is an article of faith; it is an intimate union, since it animates us with the spirit of Christ; it is a most sublime union since the Saviour Himself likens it to His union with the Father. "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us" (*John* xvii. 21). Unless Christ had spoken these words who could believe them to be true? Since we believe them, our conduct should conform to our belief.

Third Point. What is a Christian? He is one who contracts by baptism a particular relation with the Holy Spirit, whose temple he is. "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (*I Cor.*

iii. 16). Thus the same ceremonies are used in baptism as are used in the consecration of temples. The demon is exorcised from the soul of the one about to be made a Christian. The body is consecrated with Holy Oil as a figure of the oil of grace through which the Holy Spirit enters into the soul; and the Holy Spirit Himself takes possession of that soul by the mysterious breath of the minister of baptism. The Holy Spirit is the author of all the supernatural actions which the Christian performs; hence it is that they possess so great a merit. Thus St. John says: "That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (*I John* i. 3). Consequently, with the Holy Ghost.

Strive to live in conformity with the dignity of a Christian.

"Videte qualem charitatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur et simus" (*I John* iii. 1). Behold what manner of

charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God.

"Agnosce, O Christiane, dignitatem tuam."—St. Leo. Know, O Christian, the excellence of thy dignity.

Meditation for the Eleventh Day

On the Pardon of Injuries

First Point. He who is unwilling to pardon the injuries done to him, should not expect pardon for his own sins, and consequently should not hope for salvation. He alone can seek to be revenged who has no need of the pardon of God. But where can such a one be found? Sinners that we are, our only hope of salvation is in the mercy of God. But how can we hope that mercy will be shown toward us, when we do not show mercy toward others. Thou hast promised Thy mercy unto us, O Lord, provided we, in our turn, show mercy toward our brethren. "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven" (*Luke* vi. 37). We can not enter heaven save by the door of mercy, and we but close it on ourselves when we close it on our brethren.

Second Point. The revengeful man renders useless even the most efficacious

means of salvation. Prayer and the sacraments, those most salutary remedies, are unavailing in his regard; he can not pray without condemning himself; his prayer is only a horrible imprecation, for he asks his own damnation from God. What a prayer! He asks God to forgive him his trespasses, as he forgives them who trespass against him; and, as he is unwilling to forgive them who trespass against him, he asks in reality that God should never pardon him, and that He should cast him into hell with the damned. Can Satan do or wish greater evil to the revengeful man than he does or wishes to himself?

THIRD POINT. The sacrifice of the revengeful man is not acceptable to God. "Go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift" (*Matt.* v. 24). The blood that Jesus Christ offers daily on our altars where He Himself is priest and victim, although of infinite value, can not obtain pardon for him who refuses to pardon his brother. On the contrary, the blood

of this innocent Abel cries aloud for vengeance on this murderous Cain who seeks to be revenged. The sacraments are useless to the revengeful man. All the virtue of the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of His graces, which are contained in these salutary remedies, can not heal or justify his heart, if he does not soften toward his brethren. The revengeful man will never possess the grace of God, if he does not show mercy toward those who have offended him; and the absolution of the priest will only add to his sins, unless it is preceded by a sincere reconciliation between him and his enemy.

Examine your conscience to see if you have not often refused to pardon the offences of others.

"Beati misericordes, quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur" (*Matt.* v. 7). Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

"Qui fratri negat indulgentiam, sibi pariter negat."—St. Leo. He who refuses pardon to his brother, makes it impossible for God to pardon him.

Meditation for the Twelfth Day

On Frequent Confession

First Point. If you do not sin, it is needless for you to confess; but if you sin frequently, you should confess frequently. Why do you defer your confession? The longer you defer it, the more difficult it will be to make it. Your sins will only increase, and your memory of them will be less accurate. But if you forget them through your own fault, do you believe that God forgets them? Do you imagine that a forgetfulness which you could have avoided but would not, and which can justly be considered wilful forgetfulness, will excuse you before God? If that were true, your negligence would indeed render your confession less difficult.

Second Point. Is it because you are waiting until you are in the proper dispo-

sition, that you confess so rarely? Can you learn to do an action well by performing it seldom? Can you acquire the habit of penance by practising it only once a year? Can you hope to be cured of your malady by constantly deferring the remedy, and by applying it when the malady is well-nigh incurable? Do you imagine that your delay will diminish your difficulties? Is it not obvious that they only increase? By deferring your confession, your sins take firmer root, your habits grow stronger and your will becomes weakened. Does not experience teach you that the best means for living in great purity of conscience is to employ frequently a remedy which will strengthen and fortify you?

THIRD POINT. When you feel the weight of a mortal sin on your conscience, do you hasten to be relieved of it as soon as possible? By living continually in sin you grow familiar with it and nothing is more dangerous. Moreover, sin, by causing the death of your soul, makes it impossible for you to obtain the merit of

good works; for however good they appear, they merit you nothing for eternal life. What a loss! How great a misfortune it is not to realize this loss and to neglect to take the means to prevent it.

Take the resolution not to remain long in mortal sin and to disburden yourself of it as soon as possible by a good confession.

"Ante mortem confitere; a mortuo, quasi nihil, perit confessio" (*Ecclus.* xvii. 26). Give glory before death. Praise perisheth from the dead as nothing.

"Times confiteri, qui non confitendo esse non potes occultus; damnaberis tacitus, qui posses liberari confessus."—St. Augustine. You fear to confess, and yet you cannot hide your sin by not confessing it. You can be delivered from it if you confess it; whereas you will be damned if you do not confess it.

Meditation for the Thirteenth Day

On the Sincerity of Our Purpose of Amendment

First Point. It is not enough to have sorrow for past sins; we must form a sincere resolution not to commit sin in the future. We can judge of the sincerity of our sorrow for the past by the firmness of our resolution for the future. We have reason to believe that we are truly repentant for our sins, when we are faithful in keeping that resolution. The one answers in a certain manner for the other, but when we are lacking in the one, we ought to doubt extremely of our good faith in regard to the other. He is an impostor, not a penitent, says St. Gregory, who commits the same sin, over which he has wept a moment before. Let the firmness with which you keep your resolution for the future, be the criterion of the sincerity

of your sorrow for past sins, and of the integrity of your confessions.

Second Point. This resolution of amendment ought to be firm and steadfast. Weak resolves are not sufficient. In order to be truly penitent it is not enough to say, "I desire to amend." One must say, "I will amend, whatever pain it may cost me." Merely to wish to amend is the same as saying, "I will consent to renounce sin if it is not necessary to give up this or that pleasure." Merely to wish to amend is the same as saying, "God impels me by His holy inspirations to abandon sin, but I am willing to deceive myself by imagining that these holy inspirations are simply the impulses of my free will, and that inefficacious desires of conversion, are conversion itself." Is it not a false idea of amendment that has impeded you up to this time? Is not the weakness with which you have kept your resolution of amendment a proof of this?

Third Point. The resolution of amendment ought to be efficacious. "The sluggard willeth and willeth not" (*Prov.*

xiii. 4). Because he forms a weak desire of amendment he believes his resolution is firm. But since his actions belie his promise of amendment, in the depths of his heart he does not truly desire to amend. If we really desire to amend, we must make use of the proper means in order to arrive at that end. We must strive to overcome the obstacles that are opposed to our good resolutions; we must avoid the occasions that lead us into sin, however pleasing they may be to us.

Let the constancy and fidelity with which you keep your resolution for the future be the criterion of the sincerity of your sorrow for past sins.

"Desideria occidunt pigrum; noluerunt enim quidquam manus ejus operari" (*Prov.* xxi. 25). Desires kill the slothful: for his hands have refused to work at all.

"Periculose erratur quando quid de Deo est in nobis, de nobis esse putamus." —St. Bernard. We err vehemently when we attribute to ourselves that which comes from God.

Meditation for the Fourteenth Day

On the Necessity of Penance

First Point. There are only two roads that lead to heaven, the road of innocence and the road of penance. Only those who have not reached the age of reason can lay claim to the road of innocence. There is no salvation for the sinner without penance and mortification. What is a sinner, asks Tertullian? He is a man born to do penance. "Homo poenitentiae natus." A sinner must either do penance or be cast into the fires of hell. He must weep and suffer of his own free will in time, or he must weep and suffer in spite of himself for all eternity. If the gospel is true, there is no other road to heaven than that of penance.

Second Point. Every sin, says St. Augustine, must be punished by an avenging God or by penitent man. Is it

not better to avoid the rigor of God's justice by doing penance while there is yet time? If you do not pay to the justice of God the trifling debt now demanded of you, you must some day pay the entire debt. God does not will the death of the sinner; He prefers that he should repent and live. Penance, says Tertullian, takes the place of the justice of God. Penance remits eternal punishments but it exacts from you temporal punishments. God is a creditor, who obliges us sooner or later to pay the debt of our sins. If we do not pay it in time, then we must pay it in eternity. But if we wait until eternity, He will demand not only payment of the debt itself, but also the interest of that debt.

Third Point. Penance in this life is brief, because life itself is brief. It is trifling when compared with the eternal punishment which we have merited. And penance is also fruitful. The sigh of a contrite and humble heart can disarm the anger of God; a penitent tear can efface all our sins however grievous and numer-

ous they may be. The penance of the other life is long, because it is eternal; it is hard to endure because it is in some manner infinite; finally, it is useless, because it does not efface sin, or justify the sinner. An ocean of tears can not wash away the sins of a lost soul, while one tear of yours can blot out all your sins; and yet you do not weep!

Since you must do penance either in this life or in the next, take the resolution to do it now while it is fruitful.

"Poenitemini, et credite evangelio" (*Mark* i. 15). Repent, and believe the Gospel.

"Nihil tam repugnat Deo quam cor impoenitens."—St. Jerome. Nothing is so repugnant to God as an impenitent heart.

Meditation for the Fifteenth Day

On the Relapse Into Sin

First Point. Why do you fall continually into the same sins? Is it not because you do not take the means to prevent it? But why do you not take the means to prevent it? If you were to answer truthfully would you not say that you have not an earnest desire to break away from sin? If your desire were earnest you would surely take the means. You are satisfied with a vague and general desire to renounce sin—which accomplishes nothing. A desire of this kind is no desire at all; or at least it is not a desire sufficient for the sacrament of Penance. Do you believe that a sick man speaks the truth when he says that he desires to be well, if, at the same time, he refuses to take the medicine that will make him well?

But is not this case similar to yours? Can any one believe that you earnestly desire the health of your soul, if you do not take the means to procure that health?

Second Point. Perhaps you resolve to take certain means to avoid sin, but are they the proper means? The means proposed by your confessor appear difficult to you; you say they are too irksome, and thus it is obvious that your resolution to avoid sin is inefficacious. Do you require a proof of it? If you were in ill-health and certain means were proposed which would make you well and strong again, would you hesitate for a moment to make use of them? Would any means in this case be too irksome? Then why do the means proposed for your conversion appear irksome to you? Is it not because your desire for the one is efficacious, and your desire for the other is inefficacious? Now, to desire your conversion in this faint-hearted way is not to desire it at all, because if you really and earnestly desired it, you would take the means necessary to obtain it.

THIRD POINT. But there are certain obstacles, you say, that are stronger than the means proposed, and this is the reason why you fall continually into the same sins. But what are these obstacles? This or that passion, intercourse or occasion? But have you taken any measures to overcome these obstacles? Have you manfully resisted your tendency toward this or that object that places you in the occasion of sin? Have you not allowed yourself to be drawn into that occasion without any resistance on your part? These obstacles are difficult to surmount, it is true, but if it were necessary to surmount them in order to prevent the loss of your earthly goods or your health, you would not refuse to take the proper means; yet you refuse, when it is a question of avoiding sin. Whence comes this inconsistency? Is it not due to your efficacious desire for the one and your inefficacious desire for the other? Now if your desire to avoid sin is inefficacious, is your repentance sincere?

Take the resolution to make use of the

means proposed by your confessor to enable you to avoid sin and to prevent your relapse into it.

"Quam vilis facta es nimis, iterans vias tuas!" (*Jer.* ii. 36). How exceeding base art thou become, going the same ways over again.

"Inanis est poenitentia, quam sequens culpa coinquinat."—St. Augustine. It is a sign that your repentance is not sincere when it is quickly followed by a relapse into sin.

Meditation for the Sixteenth Day

On Deferring Our Conversion

First Point. When you put off your conversion, either you believe, says St. Bernard, that God will pardon your crimes, or you believe that He will not pardon them. If you believe that He will not pardon them, what greater folly can there be than to offend one so powerful, without hope of pardon, and to increase your punishment by increasing your crimes? If, on the other hand, you believe that God is so merciful that, although you have often offended Him, He will not permit you to go unforgiven, then how malicious it is to seek occasion to offend God more, instead of seeking to love Him more. God is good, but does that justify your wickedness? He is so merciful that He will forgive your sins even though they be as numerous as the

sands on the seashore, but is that a reason for you to sin the more?

Second Point. Either you believe that God will grant you only a little time in which to bring about your conversion, or you believe that He will give you a great amount of time. If you believe that God will give you only a little time, what good use should you not make of each moment? If you believe that He will give you a great amount of time, what gratitude should you not show Him, and how can you express your gratitude better than by employing well the time He gives you and refuses to so many others. God, says the wise man, has not given us time so that we may offend Him by it. How great then is our ingratitude, if we employ the time that God has given us in sin. This is what we do, however, when we defer our conversion.

Third Point. Either you believe that you will some day repent of the sins that you are constantly committing by deferring your conversion, or you do not believe it. If you do not believe it, then

your actions prove that you are either a madman or a reprobate. If you do believe it, then what folly it is to do those things of which sooner or later you will repent, or by which, if you do not repent, you will perish eternally. If you experience pleasure in putting off your conversion, it is a fatal pleasure which will end in eternal grief; but if, happily for you, your repentance should change this pleasure into grief, into true sorrow for your sins, you will experience then a true pleasure both for time and for eternity.

Be confounded at having so often tempted God by deferring your conversion, and take the resolution to repair this injury by striving henceforward to work for God's glory.

"Nemini dedit spatium peccandi" (*Ecclus.* xv. 21). He hath given no man license to sin.

"Magnum misericordia tempus non nos transeat; venturum est judicium: erit tunc poenitentia, sed infructuosa." Let us do penance now; let us not permit the time of mercy to pass by; for soon the

time of judgment and of justice will come. We will then do penance, but our penance will be useless.

Meditation for the Seventeenth Day

On Hardness of Heart

First Point. God, as well as man, is concerned in hardness of heart. Man by obstinately remaining in sin causes it, and God in punishing it places the seal of reprobation upon it. Man contributes to hardness of heart by resisting the light of grace; God, by withdrawing unheeded light and withholding extraordinary grace, punishes man's resistance. Man is unjust and wicked in hardening his heart. God is just and holy in leaving the unrepenting sinner to himself. Spiritual blindness is the cause of hardness of heart, and hardness of heart is the cause of spiritual blindness. When God punishes other sins, He often punishes only as a father in mercy; when God punishes hardness of heart He does it in just anger. Other

punishments often make penitents, but the punishment that God inflicts for hardness of heart confirms wilful reprobation. If you do not fear hardness of heart, wo to you, for it is a sign that you are already contaminated by it.

Second Point. Hardness of heart is nearly always followed by fatal consequences. The light of grace either blinds or dazzles a hard heart; it does not enlighten it. The punishments of God which lie heavy on it, cause it to revolt and fail to bring it into subjection. The purifying scourges that God sends it, crush it, but do not humble it. Miracles astonish it but do not convert it. A hard heart shows forth the power and the grandeur of God but only by manifesting the effects of His justice. The power of God was shown forth none the less in the punishment of Pharaoh than in the conversion of Nabuchodonosor. In the one God showed forth the grandeur of His power and His justice and in the other the grandeur of His mercy. The more a hardened heart has need of remedies, the

more it fears and flies from them. Alas! when it will desire to make use of them, it will be too late. Does not the aversion that you feel for these remedies, and their uselessness when you try to use them, give you cause to fear that your heart may, in some degree, be hardened?

THIRD POINT. Do you desire to know the signs of hardness of heart? St. Bernard says of a hard heart that it is not moved by compunction, that it is not softened by devotion, that it is not touched by prayers, that it does not yield to menaces, that it only grows harder when punished, that it shows nothing but ingratitude for the benefits of God, and that it is unfaithful to His grace. A hardened heart is not ashamed to do disgraceful things; it does not fear even the greatest dangers; it has no charity for its brethren, neither has it respect or fear of God; it forgets the past, neglects the present and cares not about the future. In short, it forgets its duties, and even its own condition. Behold, then, the signs of a hardened heart!

Examine yourself well to see if you have not some of these signs.

"Hodie si vocem audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra" (*Ps.* xciv. 8). To-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

"Quaeris quid sit cor durum? Si non expavescis, tuum est."—ST. BERNARD. Do you desire to know what is meant by a hardened heart? If you do not fear hardness of heart, your own heart is hardened.

Meditation for the Eighteenth Day

On Frequent Communion

First Point. We ought to communicate often because Jesus Christ has invited us to do so when He said: "Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt.* xi. 28). Our weaknesses are not an obstacle if they displease us. Christ invites to this divine banquet the sick, the blind and the lame, in order to show us that no one is excluded for not having perfect health. He has instituted this sacrament under the form of bread to show us that our souls can no more live without this divine food than our bodies can exist without material nourishment. He gives us His body under the appearance of bread, because bread is the most ordinary food. We can often change the nourishment for our body, but this divine food is the only nour-

ishment for our soul. Christ has promised manifold graces to those who approach this sacrament; and He has threatened with eternal punishment those who disregard it. He does not limit the power of priests to produce this sacrament, nor the time in which the faithful should approach it. Could He give us further proof of His infinite love for us and of His desire to have us communicate often?

Second Point. We should communicate often because the Church earnestly desires it. She gives us the unanimous opinion of the Fathers who are her interpreters. If the Eucharist, says St. Ambrose, is the daily bread, why do you allow years to pass without approaching it? Why not receive daily that which will be a daily benefit to you? The Church clearly manifested her sentiments through the Council of Trent when she implored her children, through the charity of Jesus Christ, to give testimony of their respect for this Holy Sacrament by approaching it often; and again, when she declared

that she ardently desires that all those who assist at the Holy Sacrifice should receive holy communion.

THIRD POINT. We ought to communicate often on account of the advantages we will derive from it. God forbade man, under pain of death, to eat of the tree of knowledge; nevertheless man ate of it. God commands man, under pain of death, to eat this bread of life, yet man refuses to eat of it, although he experiences so many benefits from it. What blindness! In the other sacraments man receives grace, but in the Sacrament of the Altar he receives the Source and the Author of grace. God communicates His grace to man in the Holy Eucharist as often as there is no obstacle in the way, and, at the same time, He applies to the soul the price of His blood and the efficacy of His merits, and makes him participate in His spirit by uniting man with God. What advantages, but what blindness to disregard voluntarily the holy communion!

Do not say that you are fearful of approaching Holy Communion because you

are unworthy; but strive to render yourself worthy, so that you may approach it often.

"Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis" (*John* vi. 54). Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.

"Non est audacia saepe accedere, sed indigne vel semel."—St. Chrysostom. It is not presumptuous to approach holy communion often; but it is a horrible thing to approach it even once unworthily.

Meditation for the Nineteenth Day

On Confidence in God

First Point. We can not distrust ourselves too much, neither can we have too great confidence in God. God refuses nothing to those who trust in Him. Our confidence in God is a proof of our love for Him, for we trust those we love. Nothing proves our gratitude for His kindness, His power, His wisdom and His providence, like confidence. His power is infinite; can we fail if He assists us? His wisdom is infinite; can we go astray if He guides us? His kindness is infinite; can He forget or neglect us if we rely on it?

Second Point. I am weakness itself; therefore I have reason to distrust myself. But God is all-powerful; therefore I have reason to trust in Him. Confidence unites

me to God and God to me. Hence it is that the prophet assures us, that they who trust in God will divest themselves of their own weakness, and will be clothed with the strength of God. "Qui sperant in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem" (*Is.* xl. 31). A man full of confidence in God becomes, in a certain manner, strong with the strength of God Himself. Can he, who is powerful with the power of God, be discouraged by obstacles? Can he, who is rich with the riches of God, lack anything in his necessities? Thus the prophet declares that they who hope in the Lord, "shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (*Is.* xl. 31). If, then, you are wanting in strength, it is because you are wanting in confidence.

THIRD POINT. Just as the power and strength of God never appeared so great as when it brought light out of darkness, and the most beautiful works out of nothingness, so the virtue of confidence never appears so great as when it so fortifies man that he finds motives for hope in the

face of despair. A man upheld by the virtue of confidence never hopes more, nor fears less, than when all appears lost. He never gives himself up more perfectly to God than when all the world forsakes him, and when even God Himself seems to forsake him. Hence it is that holy Job cried out, "Etiam si occiderit me, in ipso sperabo" (*Job* xiii. 15). Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him.

Pray often for the virtue of confidence, since by causing you to hope for all things, it will cause you to obtain all things.

"Scitote quia nullus speravit in Domino et confusus est" (*Ecclus.* ii. 11). Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.

"Fides Christianorum, fides impossibilium."—TERTULLIAN. The faith of Christians causes them to hope for those things which appear impossible.

Meditation for the Twentieth Day

On Humility

First Point. There are many who are patient, charitable, liberal, chaste and austere, but how rarely does one find a truly humble man? The other virtues outside of humility can make honest men, good pagans let us say, but they can not make good Christians. Without humility there can be no Christianity; and, on the other hand, without Christianity there can be no humility. Only a true Christian can be humble, and only a truly humble man can be a true Christian. Pagan philosophers have extolled other virtues, but they have ignored humility. Hence it is that our divine Saviour has given Himself as our model of humility. "Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde" (*Matt.* xi. 29). Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.

Second Point. Humility is as necessary to salvation as Baptism. Why is it we believe that Baptism is so necessary? It is because Jesus Christ has said, "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (*John* iii. 5). And did not Christ command His disciples to be humble when He said, "Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* xviii. 3). Why, therefore, do you believe that Baptism is necessary for salvation, and that humility is not, or, at least, why do you live as if that were your belief? Are not both equally sustained by the word of God? Faith teaches us that there can be no salvation for us unless we live in conformity with Christ and His holy law. The gospel and our own reason teach us that there can be no conformity with Christ without humility. Do not faith and reason unite in condemning our pride, and cause us to regard it as a mark of reprobation?

Third Point. Humility is a virtue

which can be practised in every state and condition of life. The obligation to practise this virtue rests equally on the great and on the lowly. The lowly are often humiliated without being humble. The great often desire to be humble without being humiliated. The great ought to be humble when they realize that they depend absolutely on God, and that all that they have comes from Him. They should be humble when they reflect that their greatness will serve them to no purpose, unless they humble themselves before God. They should be humble when they know that their life is opposed to the life of their Master, Christ, and that their sin is consequently a greater reason for them to be humble, because it is a great obstacle to conformity with Christ and His law.

Ask Christ to teach you the admirable doctrine of humility, since He alone is the Master of it.

"Nisi conversi fueritis et efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum coelorum" (*Matt.* xviii. 3). Unless you be converted, and become as little chil-

dren, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Quantumcunque te dejeceris, humilior Christo non eris."—St. Jerome. Although you humble yourself to the dust you will not be more humble than Christ.

Meditation for the Twenty-First Day

On Pride

First Point. Pride, says St. Augustine, is a swelling or puffing up of the heart. There is no vice more firmly rooted in man than pride; yet why should man be proud? He has only to look into himself to find more grounds for humility than for pride. Every man is proud but no man will acknowledge his pride—an indication that there is something base and disgraceful in this vice. A proud man is almost always wanting in justice and good judgment. What is more humiliating? Thus wise men regard a vain and proud man as a species of fool, and deal with him accordingly. Fortunate would the proud man be, if God were to regard him in that light; he would not then be punished so severely.

Second Point. Pride, says the Holy Spirit, is the beginning of all sin. "Ini-

tium omnis peccati est superbia" (*Ecclus.* x. 15). Every sin is a result of pride, because it is a want of submission to God. Pride does not appear to be the most grievous sin, but it is most fatal in its effects. From pride come ambition, presumption, hypocrisy and obstinacy. From pride come revolts, blasphemy, envy and revenge. From pride comes the inordinate desire to increase our wealth by illegitimate means.

THIRD POINT. Pride, says the Holy Spirit, is abominable in the sight of God. "Abominatio Domini est omnis arrogans" (*Prov.* xvi. 5). Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord. As pride is the cause of all sin, so it is the cause of all punishments of sin. Pride precipitated into hell countless multitudes of angels. Pride expelled Adam from the earthly paradise and excluded his posterity from it, by making them participate in his sin and punishment. God punishes the proud man; He deprives him of many graces and opposes his designs, because the proud man opposes the designs of God.

God abandons the proud man, and leaves him to his disgraceful passions in order to humiliate him and thus remedy his pride. How great then must be an evil which can be eradicated only in this fatal manner!

Strive to realize how deeply pride is rooted in your heart, and how fatal are its results. Take the resolution to humble yourself as often as possible.

"Odibilis coram Deo et hominibus superbia" (*Ecclus.* x. 7). Pride is hateful before God and men.

"Erubescat homo esse superbus propter quem humilis factus est Deus.—St. Augustine. Man should be ashamed to be proud when he thinks how humble God became for him.

Meditation for the Twenty-Second Day

On Patience in Sufferings

First Point. When great evils oppress the sinner, the thought of hell ought to be a powerful motive of patience. Ought the sinner to complain of any evil, however great it may appear, when he realizes that he has deserved the pains of hell, that is to say, an infinite, an eternal evil? If a lost soul could exchange places with you, you who murmur on account of your evils, he would esteem himself happy; your state would be paradise to him. At present, your state seems a hell to you because you do not meditate on the pains of hell, nor fully realize that you have deserved hell as your portion. No suffering should appear unbearable to one who has deserved the pains of hell.

Second Point. The thought of Calvary should be a great motive of patience

to a Christian. Compare your sufferings with those of Jesus Christ, and you will be ashamed to complain of them. Christ did not complain, because He knew that He was suffering for you; yet you dare complain, knowing, as you do, that you suffer for Christ and with Him. He suffered and He was innocent, yet He did not complain. You suffer and you are guilty, yet you complain. The sufferings that He endured were almost without number; moreover He had no one to comfort Him; your sufferings are few and easy to bear; and God sends you many graces to give you strength to bear them. Christ was taunted to come down from the cross. He could have done so had He willed it, but He preferred to remain there and die on the cross. Christ has placed you on a cross; He desires you to remain on it. You can not be assured of your salvation unless you remain there crucified with Christ; yet you make every effort to come down from that cross.

THIRD POINT. The thought of heaven ought to be a great motive of patience to

one that suffers. "I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven" (*II Mach.* vii. 28) said the mother of the Machabees to one of her sons. When your sufferings are most severe, the thought of the eternal happiness which will be yours, if you bear them in the spirit of Christ, should make you rejoice to suffer. As soon as St. Paul was converted, God announced to him that He must endure great sufferings for His name. And the Apostle tells us that these sufferings were excessive. "For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, of our tribulation, which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure above our strength, so that we were weary even of life" (*II Cor.* i. 8). Yet the Apostle assures us that although his sufferings were many and hard to bear, they were nothing in comparison with the recompense for which he hoped. "Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra" (*II Cor.* vii. 4). I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation. In the midst of our greatest sufferings, then, should we not be filled with joy?

The martyrs were so possessed by the thought of the crown they were about to receive, that they scarcely felt the torments inflicted upon them. "Vident coronas, vulnera non vident." You that are so impatient in your sufferings, meditate on the eternal happiness that awaits you.

Accustom yourself to meditate often on hell, Calvary and heaven when you feel your courage weakening in the midst of your tribulations.

"Non sunt condignae passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quae revelabitur in nobis" (*Rom.* viii. 18). The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.

"Nil sentit crux in nervo, dum animus est in coelo."—TERTULLIAN. When the soul is filled with the thought of heaven, it is scarcely sensible to the sufferings of the body.

Meditation for the Twenty-Third Day

On Scandal

First Point. "Wo to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh" (*Matt.* xviii. 7). "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea" (*Matt.* xviii. 6). How terrible must be the crime that could draw down on it so great a condemnation. It is a great misfortune to lose an eye, yet, according to the words of the Saviour, it is a blessing to us if by that loss we are prevented from scandalizing others.

Second Point. If you have robbed your neighbor of his innocence, his purity, and the grace of God, you must make

amends for the evil you have done to him. How can you hope to be saved unless you do so? If you have robbed Jesus Christ of the souls which are so dear to Him, and which have cost the price of His most precious blood, how can you hope for pardon unless you make reparation? The parable of the lost sheep should give you some idea of Our Saviour's sorrow for a soul that has gone astray. Do you believe that He will permit you to go unpunished if you have led souls astray? Can you doubt that His vengeance will fall on those who have caused Him so great an injury? If you feel culpable in this regard how can you be so tranquil? How can you make so little effort to satisfy and appease the anger of God?

THIRD POINT. Have you not reason to fear that the Lord will say to you as He said to Cain: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth" (*Gen.* iv. 10). Render an account of this innocent one whom you have killed and whose virtue you have destroyed. "Sanguinem ejus de manu tua requiram"

(*Ezech.* iii. 18). I will require his blood at thy hand. Thou hast set thyself up as one having more power to lose souls than I have to save them. What can you reply to these reproaches? God did not hesitate to give His life to save souls, yet you are not generous enough to restrain a passion in order to prevent the loss of souls. God became the victim of love in order to save souls, while a Christian becomes the victim of hatred to ruin souls.

Examine your conscience to see if you have not been an occasion of scandal to others. Take the resolution to make immediate reparation.

"Vae mundo a scandalis!" (*Matt.* xviii. 7). Wo to the world because of scandals.

"Quantiscumque exemplum malae conversationis praebuit, pro tantis se malis noverit rationem esse redditurum."—ST. AUGUSTINE. We must render an account for each time that our bad example has been an occasion of scandal to others.

Meditation for the Twenty-Fourth Day

On the Brevity of Life

First Point. Death is fast approaching. Everything we see, everything we hear, proves it. In a short time we will be summoned to appear before the great Judge. We must die, indeed, but we must die a good death, if we would be saved. We try to persuade ourselves that death is still far off, as if by so doing we could keep away from us death itself. We should weep constantly over the brevity of life. A young man builds his hopes for a long life, on his youth; a man in middle life, on the vigor of his age; and an old man, on the strength of his temperament. Each one believes that he has resources against death that other men have not. How strange, but how common an illusion!

Second Point. For the generality of men life is very brief. Even though we

were absolutely sure of a long life what advantage would it be to us? If we regard a long life in its relation to the present, that is to say, in regard to the affairs that occupy us, the duties incumbent upon us, the great projects that we form, the sciences we study, and the virtues that we must acquire, alas, how short it appears! But if we regard a long life in its relation to sin, ah! then it appears shorter yet. To an old man, sixty years are as a moment, and all the goods that he has possessed, all the pleasures he has enjoyed seem like a dream.

Third Point. But if we regard life in its relation to eternity it appears infinitely short. "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (*I Peter* iii. 8). The longest life then passes like an hour. Alas! we have only an hour to live, perhaps less, for who can promise himself a long life? Yet we busy ourselves with vast designs and with amassing great riches, with as much ardor and avidity as if we were to live forever. We think only of establishing

ourselves in this life of time instead of seeking to establish ourselves in the life eternal.

Take the resolution to regard each day as if it were to be the last day of your life, and do not regard death as being very far off.

"Breves dies hominis sunt . . . constituisti terminos ejus qui praeteriri non poterunt" (*Job* xiv. 5). The days of man are short . . . Thou hast appointed his bounds which can not be passed.

"Quotidie magis appropinquat recognitionis dies; omnis hora nos judicio applicat."—Euch. The day on which we must render our account is constantly advancing; every hour takes us nearer to it.

Meditation for the Twenty-Fifth Day

On the Abuse of Grace

First Point. Grace is absolutely necessary to salvation, yet there is nothing that we neglect more. There is nothing more precious than grace, and nothing that we despise more. The smallest grace is worth more than all the goods and pleasures of the world. Christ purchased grace for us at the cost of His most precious blood. Therefore when we abuse grace we trample under foot the blood of Jesus Christ. What a profanation! We not only render useless the fruit of Christ's death, but we make the most efficacious instrument of our salvation the cause of our condemnation. What blindness! If the voice of the very blood of Jesus Christ condemn us, what will justify us?

Second Point. When we do not heed the secret reproaches of our conscience, when we suppress these salutary promptings, when we close our eyes to the light that God gives us, and neglect the inspirations that He sends us, do we fully realize that we are rebelling against grace, that we are despising and abusing it? Are we fully aware of the consequences of our sin? The damned in hell know the value of grace, they weep eternally over their abuse of it; but their weeping is vain, because they can not make amends for their sin. Their abuse of grace constituted their sin in time, their vain repentance is part of their punishment in eternity. If you reflect on this, can you any longer resist the inspirations of grace, which God is perhaps sending you at the present moment?

Third Point. Alas, I had believed, O Lord, that I must fear only for the crimes that I had committed; but now I realize that I should fear yet more for the graces that I have received, than for my crimes, or rather I should fear for my crimes ac-

cording to the measure of grace that has been mine. "Wo to thee, Corozain, wo to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sack-cloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the judgment than for you" (*Luke* x. 13, 14). O slothful and unfaithful Christian, some poor pagan will be your judge. One-half of the graces that God has given you would have converted him, and have made him, perhaps, a saint; and yet all these graces together have failed to make you a faithful Christian.

Take the resolution to be more faithful to grace; and if you feel that God is sending you His grace at the present moment, do not resist it lest He withdraw it from you entirely.

"Exhortamur ne in vacuum gratiam Dei recipiatis" (*II Cor.* vi. 1). We exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

"Non gratia Dei sola, nec ipse solus,

sed gratia Dei cum illo."—ST. AUGUSTINE. It is not grace alone that does good, nor man alone, but the grace of God with man.

Meditation for the Twenty-Sixth Day

On the Uncertainty of the State of Grace

First Point. Nothing is more humiliating to us than our uncertainty of the state of grace. No one knows, says the Holy Spirit, whether he be worthy of love or of hatred. Ah, how great should be my fear! If so great a saint as St. Bernard feared, how much more should we fear, since we are great sinners! The just no less than sinners share in this terrible uncertainty, but not in the same manner; for the fear of sinners is well founded, while the fear of the just is a holy fear and springs from their humility. Although sinners believe that by repentance they can regain the grace that they have lost, yet their frequent relapses into the same sins ought to dispel that belief. One has not entirely recovered from a malady into which one constantly falls again. We

can hardly believe that we have received sacramental grace when we perceive no effects of it.

Second Point. Even the most just man can not be perfectly sure that he is in the state of grace. Although he relies on the mercy of God and the efficacy of the sacraments, he has always reason to fear. On what can he base his certitude? On evidence? That is impossible because grace, whether it be regarded in its source, in itself, or in its effects, not being sensible, can not be obviously known to us who depend, to so great an extent, on our senses for cognition. Can the assurance of the sinner be founded on faith? Now faith teaches us that we can not be assured of the state of grace without revelation. There are certain marks, it is true, whereby we can judge whether or not we are in the state of grace, but these marks are not infallible; thus we always have grounds for fear and humility. How terrible is this uncertainty, O Lord, and how overwhelming it would be, if Thou didst not uphold me!

THIRD POINT. Who had more reason to be assured of the state of grace than St. Paul? Should not his transports to the third heaven, his zeal for the glory of God, his sufferings and his ardent love for Jesus Christ, have assured him of the state of grace? Yet he says: "I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified" (*I Cor.* iv. 4). Why did his fear seem to him so well founded? Because he knew it was God who would judge him. "Qui me judicat Dominus est" (*Ibid.*). Who then, however fervent and holy he may be, will dare be assured that he is in the state of grace? It is only a holy fear that can give us any assurance.

Be humble at the thought of the uncertainty of the state of grace, but do not let this thought discourage you.

"Nescit homo utrum amore an odio dignus sit" (*Eccles.* ix. 1). Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred.

"Terribilis est locus iste; totus cohorrui si quando in illum incidi."—ST. BERNARD. This passage of the Scriptures which

teaches me that no one knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred appears terrible to me; I never read it without fear.

Meditation for the Twenty-Seventh Day

On Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

First Point. Jesus and Mary are so closely united, that they can not well be separated. We can not love and honor the Son without loving and honoring the Mother. All the merit and glory of the Mother come from the Son, and all the honor that we render to the Mother is, at the same time, rendered to the Son. The heart is not divided by the devotion we have for Mary. On the contrary, it is united more strongly to the heart of Jesus. The confidence that we have in the protection of the Blessed Virgin does not diminish the confidence we should have in her Son. On the contrary, it increases it and renders it more just and efficacious. The love of Jesus for Mary is unbounded; therefore Mary's power is unbounded; and her love for me is in

proportion to my confidence in her. How unbounded then should be my confidence! Loving and generous as she is, can she refuse to love one who loves and serves her? Since Jesus loves Mary with an infinite love, can He refuse to love those that she loves? Will He permit any one to be lost whom she desires to save? Will He suffer a heart that burns with love for His Mother to burn in the flames of hell?

SECOND POINT. How culpable would I be, if I should ever despair of the mercy of God, when I have for my mother the Mother of mercy. I will oppose the justice of the Son with the mercy of the Mother. Must not the one yield before the other? Will not the prayers of Mary be more potent to appease the justice of her Son, than my crimes are to excite it? I know that my salvation is assured when I leave it in the hands of Mary. If she does not obtain it, it will be the fault either of her power over her Son, or of her love for me: can I doubt of either without outraging both the Son and the Mother? Can she be lacking in power

over her Son, she to whom her Son has delegated in an especial manner His omnipotence; she who can do all things by her Son, who can do all things with her Son, and who has great intercession with her Son? The power of Mary ought to be measured by her dignity as Mother of God, by the love of her Son for her, by the grandeur of her obligations to Him, and by the title of Mediatrix of men with which He honors her.

THIRD POINT. But if power is not wanting to Mary, neither is love for us wanting. "Nec facultas illi deest, nec voluntas" (ST. BERNARD). By becoming the Mother of God she became the mother of men. Christ, in giving His Mother to St. John, gave her likewise to all the faithful. We are then her adopted children; wretched children we are, it is true, but our miseries augment her love and her tenderness, because she is the Mother of mercy and the Refuge of sinners. Mary is the Mother of God, she is my mother. She has great intercession with her Son and her love for me is un-

bounded. Therefore, if I serve her well, if I place my confidence in her, should I not feel assured of my salvation?

Take the resolution to have a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin and a great confidence in her protection; but strive to merit her protection by being zealous in her service and faithful to her Son.

"Qui me invenerit inveniet vitam, et hauriet salutem a Domino" (*Prov.* viii. 35). He that shall find Me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.

"Totum nos habere voluit per Mariam, qui et ipsum filium nos habere voluit per Mariam."—St. Bernard. God who has given us His Son through Mary, has willed that we should obtain the graces He has merited for us, by the intercession of Mary.

Meditation for the Twenty-Eighth Day

On Prayer

First Point. Jesus Christ has attributed an infallible efficacy to prayer made in His name. Why is it then that our prayers have so little effect? It is because when we pray we are often in the state of sin. A sinner who does not desire to be converted, can not pray in the manner that Jesus Christ has taught, without contradicting and condemning himself. He asks that the name of God be hallowed and glorified, and at the same time he dishonors it. He asks that the kingdom of God might come, yet he revolts against it and allows sin to reign in his heart. He asks that the will of God be accomplished, yet he opposes it by violating God's commandments. He asks that God give him the supersubstantial bread, the bread of life, yet he eats this bread unworthily.

He asks God to pardon him, yet he continues to offend God. He asks God to deliver him from his sovereign evil, which is sin, and yet he desires to continue in sin. What inconsistency! What a subject of condemnation!

Second Point. Our prayer is not efficacious because we do not ask for what is necessary. Our prayer is heard, says St. Augustine, only in as far as we pray in the name of the Saviour. Now we can not demand in the name of our Saviour anything that is contrary to our salvation. You ask God for success in this or that unjust affair, and do you not commit a new crime when you seek to make God an accomplice in your injustice? You ask God for health and temporal goods, which He foresees will be obstacles to your salvation, because of the great attachment you will have for them, and the abuse you will make of them. God hears your prayer by refusing your request. God does not harken to your words nor does He regard your desires. You desire to be happy; those temporal goods that you

demand will only render you criminal, and will consequently make you unhappy. O Lord, refuse me everything that would be an obstacle to my salvation.

THIRD POINT. Our prayer is not efficacious because we do not pray as we should. "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss" (*James* iv. 3). Your prayer lacks the conditions necessary to render it efficacious. You pray without devotion, without attention. You pray without respect and your prayer becomes a sin. "Oratio ejus fiat in peccatum" (*Ps.* cviii. 7). May his prayer be turned to sin. Are you deserving that God hear you, when you offend Him by your manner of praying? You pray without that lively faith that the Saviour has always enjoined as a necessary condition for obtaining what is sought. "I say unto you, all things, whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you" (*Mark* xi. 24). Christ did not say that we shall obtain all that we ask, but all that we ask with faith. Finally, you become dis-

couraged too easily; and the infallibility of prayer is generally attached to perseverance. If all these conditions are wanting in your prayer, you have only yourself to blame that your prayer is not heard.

Examine to see which of these conditions is lacking in your prayer.

"Petitis, et non accipitis, eo quod male petatis" (*James* iv. 3). You ask, and receive not: because you ask amiss.

"Non petitur in nomine Salvatoris quidquid est contra rationem salutis."—St. Augustine. We can not ask in the name of the Saviour anything contrary to our salvation.

Meditation for the Twenty-Ninth Day

On Self-Knowledge

First Point. There is nothing so important as self-knowledge; humility is the foundation of perfection, but self-knowledge is the foundation of humility. We are proud because we do not know ourselves. If we should have great knowledge of sciences, and have not self-knowledge, we know nothing. But if we should be ignorant of all things else, and have self-knowledge, we know a great deal. Of what advantage is it to know the causes and the effects of all that happens in the universe, if I do not know what is going on in my own heart? I am not charged with the government of the universe, but I am charged with the government of my own heart. Therefore I am obliged to observe all its emotions in order to regu-

late them. The knowledge of my own self leads directly toward the knowledge of God. I can not know myself without being convinced of my nothingness, my miseries, and my dependence on God; and I can not know these things without knowing the plentitude and sovereign domain of God, from which I can never escape. Let me know myself, O Lord, says St. Augustine, in order that I may know Thee.

Second Point. We can not live long with any man without knowing him well. Yet how strange it is that we have lived so long with ourselves, and do not know ourselves. We make it one of our chief concerns to be ignorant of our own condition. This ignorance springs from our own negligence. Self-study is painful and we prefer to save ourselves this pain. Pride also contributes to this ignorance. Self-knowledge humiliates us; by entering into ourselves we discover our miseries and our weaknesses; we know that it is necessary to remove them, but, because it is too irksome, we prefer to be

blind and proud rather than to be enlightened and humble.

THIRD POINT. Our self-love is the ordinary cause of this ignorance; we love our miseries and our foibles. Yet if we enter into ourselves, if we examine all the emotions and disorders of the heart we can not but see the great deformity existing there. We needs must fear the consequences of this deformity, and take the proper means to remedy it. We must be very courageous and do great and continual violence to ourselves. Pride, self-love and sloth are our great obstacles. Thou alone, O Lord, canst fortify me against my weakness and my slothfulness. Let me behold my miseries in the same light as Thou dost behold them, so that I may be inspired with a holy horror of them. Deliver me from them, or rather leave to me those miseries that are not displeasing to Thee, and that serve to humble me; for no remedy is too severe for an evil so incurable as my pride.

Take the resolution to study yourself

continually, and to prefer the knowledge of yourself to all other knowledge.

"Universa vanitas, omnis homo vivens" (*Ps.* xxxviii. 6). And indeed all things are vanity, every man living.

"Noverim me, noverim te."—St. Augustine. Let me know myself, O Lord, in order that I may know Thee.

Meditation for the Thirtieth Day

On Hell

First Point. I have deserved hell. Oh, how this realization ought to animate me! Who would believe that the thought of hell could light up the love of God in our hearts. I have deserved hell as often as I have committed mortal sin, yet God has delivered me from this greatest of evils as often as I have repented. What gratitude then do I not owe God for having preserved me from so great a misfortune? If God could call one of the lost souls from hell and deliver it from its punishments, what an obligation would rest upon that soul! But does not this same obligation rest upon me, since God has so often delivered me from hell? How many there are who have been hurled into hell after one mortal sin? What mercy has He not shown to me! I know that I have

not merited this mercy, and that I owe it entirely to God's bounty. How inexcusable then am I, if I am ungrateful for it.

Second Point. I have deserved hell. Oh, how this knowledge ought to excite me to penance! Truly I can say with holy Job, "Infernus domus mea est" (*Job* xvii. 13). Hell is my house. I would be there at this moment if God had dealt justly with me. Yes, eternal torments would have been my portion, had not the blood of Christ cried louder for mercy than my crimes for vengeance. Should I hesitate, then, to submit to the penances which my confessor imposes on me; should I refuse the crosses that come to me from God, when I think of the eternal torments that I have so justly deserved? Any punishment ought to be acceptable in exchange for the eternal punishments of hell.

Third Point. I have deserved hell, and perhaps I still deserve it. Oh, how I should fear! How I should humble myself! How certain am I that I may not

yet fall into the avenging hands of God? I know not whether I be worthy of love or hatred. Even the greatest saints feared, and what should be my sentiments? Should not this uncertainty cause me fear and excite me to penance? Should I find delight in the vain and fleeting pleasures of the world? Is this becoming in one who is in danger of hell's fire? If it were necessary to cut myself off from the world, and to pass the remainder of my life in performing the most severe penances, so that I might be secure from the fear of hell, should I hesitate for a moment to do so? But that is not demanded. God asks me only to restrain a passion or to give up some pleasure. If I do not do as God commands me, how does my conduct accord with my faith?

When some cross or humiliation is laid upon you, say to yourself: What is this in comparison with the pains of hell which I have so often deserved?

"Nisi quia Dominus adjuvit me, paulo minus habitasset in inferno anima mea"

(*Ps.* xciii. 17). Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.

"Vigilias times et jejunia, sed haec levia sunt meditanti flammas aeternas."—St. Bernard. You fear vigils and fasts, but these are nothing to one who thinks of the pains of hell.

Meditation for the Thirty-First Day

On Heaven

First Point. What is heaven? It is a country whose inhabitants possess naught save God Himself. In heaven we shall see God, we shall possess God, we shall love and enjoy God. We shall see Him face to face.[1] We shall possess God without the fear of losing Him. We shall love Him uninterruptedly, perfectly and undividedly, for He will fill each heart entirely. We shall enjoy Him unceasingly, because each moment new beauties will radiate from Him. Though always the same in Himself, He will be forever new to us. Hence the words of St. John in the Apocalypse: "Cantabant quasi canticum novum" (*Apoc.* xiv. 3). And they sung as it were a new canticle.

Second Point. In seeing and possess-

[1] I Cor. xiii. 12.

ing God in heaven, we shall become like to God: holy, pure, wise, powerful and happy, sharing the happiness of God Himself, a pure, constant, universal and eternal happiness. We shall be transformed into Him; our wills, our affections, our desires, will be like God's. He will be all things to us, and we shall find our *all* in Him. He alone, O Lord, who can conceive what Thou art, can conceive the things Thou hast prepared for them that love Thee. But Thou alone, my Saviour, canst enable me to conceive these things, since it is Thou alone Who canst enable me to merit and possess them.

THIRD POINT. When, O my Saviour, shall I conceive of Thy goodness? When shall I contemplate Thy divine face? When shall I admire the glory of Thy kingdom? When shall I see Thee robed in Thy splendor? When wilt Thou fill my soul with this torrent of pleasures that inundates the holy city of Sion? How long will my enemies insult me, saying, "Ubi est Deus tuus?" (*Ps.* xli. 4). Where is Thy God? I know that no one

can see Thee and live, but death would be a boon to me, if by it I could possess Thee forever.

Imitate the practice of St. Ignatius who, continually occupied with the thought of heaven, was wont to say, "How I despise this world when I think of heaven."

"Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine virtutum! Concupiscit et deficit anima mea in atria Domini" (*Ps.* lxxxiii. 2, 3). How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth, and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.

"Uno perfruemur, sed ipsum unum omnia nobis erit."—St. Augustine. In heaven we shall possess only one good; but it will embrace all other goods.

Morning Prayers

As soon as you awake, make the sign ✠ of the cross, saying:

Glory be to the Father, who hath created me.

Glory be to the Son, who hath redeemed me.

Glory be to the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified me.

Blessed be to the holy and undivided Trinity now and forever. Amen.

On rising from your bed say:

In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, I arise. May He bless, preserve, and govern me, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

While you are dressing, occupy yourself with pious thoughts and meditations, on some point in the life or passion of your Saviour, on God's mercies, on your own sins, on the temptations of the world, on the shortness of life, on eternity, etc.; or say some psalm or hymn.

As soon as you are dressed, prepare to say your morning prayers. Before you begin, recollect yourself; think who you are, and Whom you are about to address; and endeavor to clothe yourself with sentiments of humility, reverence, and awe.

Make the sign of the cross, saying:

In the name of the ✠ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Come, O Holy Ghost, replenish the hearts of Thy faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Thy divine love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created.

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray

O God, Who by the light of the Holy Ghost didst instruct the hearts of the faithful, give us, by the same Holy Spirit, a love and relish for what is right and just, and constant enjoyment of His comforts, through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

We offer Thee, O my God, the prayers and actions we are going to perform this day, for the glory of Thy holy name, for the exaltation of Thy holy Church, the ex-

tirpation of schisms and heresies, for peace among Christian princes, and for all the intentions of the same holy Church.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION

Hail, Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I BELIEVE in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified; died, and was buried; He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

THE CONFITEOR

I CONFESS to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through

my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech blessed Mary, ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May the almighty God have mercy on me, and forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins. Amen.

AN ACT OF FAITH

O MY God! I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; I believe that Thy divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.

AN ACT OF HOPE

O MY God! relying on Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

AN ACT OF LOVE

O MY God! I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

AN ACT OF CONTRITION

O MY God! I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life.

THE LITANY OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

(An indulgence of 300 days, once a day.)

LORD, have mercy on us. *Christ, have mercy on us.*

Lord, have mercy on us.

Jesus, hear us.

Jesus, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Ghost,
Holy Trinity, one God,
Jesus, Son of the living God,
Jesus, splendor of the Father,
Jesus, brightness of eternal light,
Jesus, king of glory,
Jesus, the sun of justice,
Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary,
Jesus, amiable,
Jesus, admirable,
Jesus, the powerful God,
Jesus, Father of the world to come,
Jesus, Angel of the great council,
Jesus, most powerful,
Jesus, most patient,

Have mercy on us!

Jesus, most obedient,
Jesus, meek and humble of heart,
Jesus, lover of chastity,
Jesus, lover of us,
Jesus, God of peace,
Jesus, author of life,
Jesus, model of all virtues,
Jesus, zealous for souls,
Jesus, our God,
Jesus, our refuge,
Jesus, father of the poor,
Jesus, treasure of the faithful,
Jesus, good shepherd,
Jesus, true light,
Jesus, eternal wisdom,
Jesus, infinite goodness,
Jesus, our way and our life,
Jesus, joy of angels,
Jesus, king of the patriarchs,
Jesus, master of the apostles,
Jesus, teacher of the evangelists,
Jesus, strength of martyrs,
Jesus, light of confessors,
Jesus, purity of virgins,
Jesus, crown of all saints,
Be merciful, *spare us, O Jesus!*
Be merciful, *graciously hear us, O Jesus!*
From all evil, *deliver us, O Jesus!*

Have mercy on us!

From all sin,
From Thy wrath,
From the snares of the devil,
From the spirit of fornication,
From eternal death,
From the neglect of Thy inspirations,
By the mystery of Thy holy incarnation,
By Thy nativity,
By Thy infancy,
By Thy most divine life,
By Thy labors,
By Thy agony and passion,
By Thy cross and dereliction,
By Thy languors,
By Thy death and burial,
By Thy resurrection,
By Thy ascension,
By Thy institution of the Most Holy Eucharist,
By Thy joys,
By Thy glory,

Deliver us, O Jesus!

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Jesus!*
Lamb of God, etc., *graciously hear us, O Jesus!*
Lamb of God, etc., *have mercy on us, O Jesus!*

Jesus, hear us.
Jesus, graciously hear us.

Let us pray

O Lord Jesus Christ! who hast said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," mercifully attend to our supplications and grant us the gift of Thy divine charity, that we may ever love Thee with our whole hearts, and never desist from Thy praise.

Give us, O Lord, a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name, for Thou never ceasest to direct and govern by Thy grace those whom Thou instructest in the solidity of Thy love; who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

THE ANGELUS DOMINI

To be said morning, noon, and evening, throughout the year, except in the Paschal time, that is, from noon of Holy Saturday till noon of the eve of Trinity Sunday, in honor of the incarnation of Our Lord. It is to be said *kneeling,* except from Saturday noon to Sunday evening inclusive, when it is said standing.

1. THE angel of the Lord declared unto Mary; and she conceived of the Holy Ghost. Hail Mary, etc.

2. Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word. Hail Mary, etc.

3. And the Word was made flesh: and dwelt among us. Hail Mary, etc.

V. Pray for us, holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

POUR forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His passion and cross, be brought to the glory of the resurrection; through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

THE REGINA CŒLI

To be said standing, during the Paschal season.

QUEEN of heaven, rejoice. Alleluia.

For He whom thou wast made worthy to bear. Alleluia.

Hath risen as He said. Alleluia.

Pray for us to our God. Alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary. Alleluia.

R. For the Lord hath risen indeed. Alleluia.

Let us pray

God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, hast vouchsafed to make glad the whole world; grant us, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may attain the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

THE SALVE REGINA

Hail, holy Queen! Mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness, and our hope! to thee do we cry, poor banished sons of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy

womb, Jesus. O clement! O loving! O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Make me worthy to praise thee, holy Virgin.

R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

Blessed be God in His saints. Amen.

Evening Prayers

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Let us enter in spirit into the adorable Heart of Jesus; let us place ourselves in the presence of God; let us adore Him and give Him thanks for all the benefits we have received from Him, particularly this day.

O my God! we adore Thee through the Sacred Heart of Thy divine Son, as our Creator and Sovereign God; we give Thee thanks for all Thy mercies to us, spiritual and temporal, general and particular, but more especially for the favors bestowed on us this day. May Thy holy name be eternally praised and glorified, and may we never be ungrateful for Thy bounties. Amen.

Let us ask of Our Lord Jesus Christ the grace to discover the sins we have committed this day, and let us beg of Him a true sorrow for them.

O my Lord Jesus Christ! Judge of the living and the dead, before Whom we must one day appear to give an exact account of our whole life; enlighten us, we beseech Thee, and give us an humble and contrite heart, that we may see wherein we have offended Thy infinite Majesty, and judge ourselves now with such a just severity that Thou mayst then judge us with mercy and clemency.

Let us examine ourselves, and consider how we have spent this day; what sins we have committed against God, our neighbor, or ourselves; and reflect whether we have complied with the full duty of our state of life.

Here pause ten minutes for the general examen.

Then say the Confiteor, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Apostle's Creed.

Most merciful Lord! we are sorry from the bottom of our hearts for all the sins we have committed purely because they are offensive to Thee, who art a God of infinite goodness: we sincerely detest them, and firmly purpose, through Thy holy grace, never to offend Thee any more. Enlighten our understanding, and strengthen our will, that we may persevere in Thy favor till death. Amen.

O my God! we firmly believe all the sacred truths the Catholic Church believes and teaches, because Thou hast revealed them.

Relying on Thy goodness and promises, we hope to obtain the pardon of our sins, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and by the intercession of His blessed Mother, and of all the saints.

We love Thee, above all things, with our whole heart and soul, purely for Thyself, and we desire to love Thee, as the blessed do in heaven. We also love our neighbor, for Thy sake, as we love ourselves. And we sincerely forgive all who have injured us, and ask pardon of all whom we have injured.

We adore all the designs of Thy divine Providence, resigning ourselves entirely to Thy will. We renounce the devil with all his works, the world with all its pomps, and the flesh with all its temptations. We desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

V. Father, into Thy hands we commend our spirit.

R. Sweet Jesus! receive our souls. May the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and all the saints and angels, glorify and love the Sacred Heart of Jesus for us this night, and pray for us to Our Lord, that we may be preserved during it from all sin and evil.

Blessed St. Michael, defend us in the day of battle, that we may not be lost at the dreadful judgment. O angels of God! to whose care we are committed by the Supreme Clemency, enlighten, govern, and defend us this night from all sin and danger.

Save us, O Lord! waking, and keep us sleeping, that we may watch with Christ, and rest in peace. Amen.

V. Vouchsafe, O Lord, this night to keep us without sin.

R. Have mercy on us, O Lord! have mercy on us.

V. O Lord, hear our prayer.

R. And let our supplication come unto Thee.

Visit, we beseech Thee, O Lord! this habitation, and drive from it all the snares

of the enemy. Let Thy holy angels dwell herein, to preserve us in peace; and may Thy blessing be upon us forever; through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

God the Father! bless us: Jesus Christ! defend and keep us: Divine Spirit! enlighten and sanctify us, this night, and forever: and may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ! we humbly beg of Thee, by the precious blood Thou didst shed for us in the Garden of Olives, that Thou wilt give Thy blessing to those who are in their agony; and that Thou wilt deliver the poor souls from purgatory, but especially the most abandoned. Conduct them to Thy glory, where they will praise and bless Thee forever and ever. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, etc., seven times. Hail Mary, etc.

THE MEMORARE

(Plenary indulgence once a month.)

REMEMBER, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any

one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother. To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate! despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

THE LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(An indulgence of 300 days, each time.)

LORD, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven, *Have mercy on us.*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *Have mercy on us.*
God the Holy Ghost, *Have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *Have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary,
Holy Mother of God,
Holy Virgin of virgins,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine grace,
Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,
Mother inviolate,
Mother undefiled,
Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of good counsel,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Saviour,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,
Tower of David,

Pray for us!

Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of angels,
Queen of patriarchs,
Queen of prophets,
Queen of apostles,
Queen of martyrs,
} *Pray for us!*

Queen of confessors, *Pray for us!*

Queen of virgins, *Pray for us!*

Queen of all saints, *Pray for us!*

Queen conceived without original sin, *Pray for us!*

Queen of the most holy Rosary, *Pray for us!*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord!*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord!*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us!*

V. May the divine assistance always remain with us.

R. Amen.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Devotions for Mass

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER AT THE BEGINNING OF MASS

RECEIVE, O Holy Trinity, one God, the holy sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which I, Thy unworthy servant, desire now to offer unto Thy divine Majesty by the hands of this Thy minister, with all the sacrifices which have ever been or are to be offered unto Thee, in union with that most holy sacrifice offered by the same Christ Our Lord at the Last Supper, and on the altar of the cross. I offer it unto Thee with the utmost affection of devotion, out of pure love for Thine infinite goodness, and according to the most holy intention of the same Christ Our Lord, and of our Holy Mother Church.

AT THE CONFITEOR

O BLESSED Trinity, one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, prostrate in spirit before Thee, I here confess, in the sight of the whole court of heaven, and of all Thy faithful, my innumerable treasons against Thy divine Majesty. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned: I have grievously offended Thee through the whole course of my life, in thought, word, and deed; and therefore am unworthy to lift mine eyes to heaven, or so much as to utter Thy sacred name: how much more am I unworthy to appear here in Thy sanctuary, and to assist among Thy angels at these heavenly mysteries, which require so much purity, because Jesus Christ Himself is here in person both Priest and Victim! But, O my God, Thy mercies are above all Thy works, and Thou wilt not despise a contrite and humble heart: therefore I here venture to come into Thy temple, and with the poor publican, I strike my breast and say: O God, be merciful to me a sinner;

O God, be merciful to me a sinner; O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I humbly hope to find this mercy which I crave, through that passion and death which are here commemorated. O Fountain of mercy, grant this mercy to me and to all poor sinners! Amen.

WHEN THE PRIEST GOES TO THE ALTAR

Let us adore the Heart of Jesus, which has loved us so much; let us prostrate ourselves before Him, and bewail the sins of which we have been guilty. Grant us, O Lord, a contrite and humble heart; let the homage of our adorations be as acceptable to Thee as if we offered Thee thousands of victims.

AT THE INTROIT

The Lord hath opened the gates of heaven; He hath rained down manna to feed us; He hath given us the Bread of angels. Thy goodness, O my God, hath prepared it for the poor and humble of heart; blessed art Thou, O God of Israel! Thou only canst work such wonders for

me; I will offer to Thee, in the presence of all Thy people, the homage of my love and gratitude.

He shall call upon me and I will hear Him; I will deliver Him and glorify Him with the length of days. He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven.

My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare: look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor. To Thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul; in Thee, O my God, have I put my trust; let me not be confounded.

AT THE KYRIE

O Father of infinite mercy, have pity on Thy children; O Jesus, sacrificed for us, apply to us the merits of Thy precious Blood; O Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, descend into our hearts, and inflame them with Thy love.

AT THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

What happiness for us that the Son of the Most High should have been pleased

to dwell amongst us, and have vouchsafed to offer us an abode in His divine Heart! Suffer us, O Lord, to mingle our voices with those of the angelic choir, to thank Thee for so great a favor; and let us say with them, "Glory to God in the highest heavens." O Almighty Father, we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee; we give Thee thanks for all the benefits which Thou hast lavished upon us without ceasing. O Jesus, Lamb without spot, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Who reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost in glory, and meritest all our homage on earth.

AT THE COLLECTS

O Lord, vouchsafe favorably to hear the prayers which Thy priest offers to Thee for the Church and for me.

I earnestly beseech Thee to grant me those graces and virtues of which I have need, in order to deserve Thy love. Fill

my heart with eternal gratitude for all the blessings which Thou hast conferred upon me, with a lively horror of sin, and with perfect charity toward my neighbor. Make my whole life worthy of one who is Thy child. I deserve not to be heard for my own sake, O my God, but I beseech Thy mercy through the infinite merits of Thy divine Son.

O Divine Jesus, inexhaustible Fountain of all good things, open to us, we beseech Thee, the interior of Thy heart, that, having entered by pious meditation into this august sanctuary of divine love, we may fix forever there our hearts, as the place wherein are found the treasure, the repose, and the happiness of holy souls.

AT THE EPISTLE

THOU hast vouchsafed, O Lord, to teach us Thy sacred truths by the prophets and apostles. Oh, grant that we may so improve by their doctrine and example in the love of Thy holy name and of Thy holy law, that we may show forth by our

lives whose disciples we are; that we may no longer follow the corrupt inclinations of flesh and blood, but master all our passions; that we may be ever directed by Thy light, and strengthened by Thy grace, to walk in the way of Thy commandments, and to serve Thee with clean hearts. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

AT THE GOSPEL

O God, the Father of Light, blessed forever be Thy mercy, whereby Thou hast called the nations of the earth from the darkness of ignorance and the shades of death into the marvelous light of Thy faith; grant that all mankind, being delivered by Thee from the slavery of Satan and of sin, may take upon them the light burden and sweet yoke of Thy holy law; that Thy name may be known and praised through all the earth. Behold, O Lord, how many there are who still remain in the darkness of error and of sin; and amongst those who know Thy name behold how many, with an unspeakable malice, love

and worship themselves and created things, instead of Thee, who art the only and infinite God! Grant, then we beseech Thee, by Thy almighty grace, that all mankind may become one family of saints, seeking only Thy kingdom and justice. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AT THE CREED

I FIRMLY believe—because God, who is infallible truth, hath so revealed it to the holy Catholic Church, and through the Church to us—I firmly believe that there is only one God, in three divine Persons, equal and distinct, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: that the Son became man, and through the operation of the Holy Spirit took flesh and a human soul in the womb of the most pure Virgin Mary, died for us upon the cross, rose again, ascended into heaven, and will come from thence at the end of the world to judge all the living and dead, to give paradise to the good, and hell to the wicked forever; and furthermore, upon the same motive, I believe

everything that holy Church believes and teaches. In this faith I desire to live and die. Grant, O Lord, that my life may be conformable with my faith, that my faith may be animated by good works, that I may never be ashamed to declare myself a Catholic, and may constantly maintain the interests of Thy holy religion. Draw closer to me, Lord, the bonds that bind me to Thy holy Church; put into my heart a spirit of perfect obedience to its lawful pastors. In its bosom I became Thy child, and in its bosom I desire to live and die. Amen.

DURING THE OFFERTORY

I ADORE Thee, O my God; and, in union with the priest, offer Thee this sacrifice, for Thy honor and glory, in thanksgiving for all the benefits conferred upon myself and upon the whole world; and in satisfaction for my many sins, and the sins of all men. Accept, O Lord, this holocaust, which is no other than Thy divine Son, at once made Priest and Victim, and apply His saving merits to my needy soul.

Be comforted, O my heart, Jesus sacrifices Himself for thee.

O my Lord Jesus Christ, in remembrance and praise of the boundless love with which Thou didst give Thyself wholly to us upon the altar of the cross, behold I offer unto Thee this day this present sacrifice of the Mass, together with all those which are celebrated throughout the world, by the hands of Thy priests, to be presented to Thy eternal Father, in union with, and in virtue of, that oblation in which Thou Thyself, dying on the cross, didst offer Thy sacred Body and Blood for the salvation of the world.

Grant that the oblation of Thy same Body and Blood, which here is renewed in mystery, and is made under the form of bread and wine, may effectually obtain its proper fruit; that thereby the living may receive grace, and the faithful departed everlasting rest.

Accept, also, O Lord, this same sacrifice, which contains in itself the fruit of Thy passion and death, as an act of

thanksgiving for the innumerable benefits Thou hast conferred upon us, and a propitiation and satisfaction for the countless sins we have committed, the good we have omitted to do, and the punishments we have deserved. Who livest, etc.

Sin hath made us the enemies of our God, but Jesus Christ, by His death, hath reconciled us with His divine Father. It is in the Sacred Heart that this reconciliation is accomplished. O my soul, how Jesus Christ hath loved us! At what a price He hath redeemed us! Not with gold, nor with riches, but by the voluntary shedding of His Blood. He hath sacrificed Himself for us: let us, then, live only for Him, let us sacrifice ourselves together with Him.

Thou willest, O Jesus, that I should be a victim of love, wholly consecrated to Thy divine Heart: it is my most ardent desire. Thy benefits are numberless; Thou hast broken the bonds of my servitude; Thou hast adopted me for Thy child; Thou hast admitted me to Thy table; Thou hast given me a place in Thy

divine Heart; and even yet, for all my continual prevarications, Thou preparest me an everlasting blessedness; how could I ever forget so many benefits? I will publish Thy mercies, and will never cease to love Thee with all the fervor of my heart. But, O my God, my heart is not full enough of love and fervor to be an offering worthy of Thee. What, then, shall I give Thee? I will give Thee Thy Son. That Son, the most worthy object of Thy complacency, will supply my inability. O Lord, look not on me, but on this Divine Offering.

AT THE LAVABO

O my Jesus, would that I could take Thee to witness the holiness of my life and the innocence of my heart. But, with the Prophet, I must cry out: It is in Thy mercy only that I place my hope; my consolation is in meditating on Thy promises to the penitent heart, and Thy faithfulness in performing them: confounded at all that I have committed this day, and

encouraged by the favors which Thou hast bestowed upon me, I can but promise to correspond better with Thy graces than I have hitherto done. I will purify myself more and more with tears of penitence; I will bless Thee as I do this day; and I will sing of the wonders of Thy power and of Thy mercy.

AT THE SUSCIPE

O MOST holy and adorable Trinity, vouchsafe to receive this our sacrifice in remembrance of Our Saviour's passion, resurrection, and glorious ascension; and grant that we may die with Him to our sins; rise with Him to a new life, and ascend with Him to Thee. Let those saints whose memory we celebrate on earth remember us before Thy throne in heaven, and obtain mercy for us, through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AT THE ORATE FRATRES

THE creature can offer nothing to the Creator that can be worthy of His accept-

ance; I unite myself, therefore, to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which can alone merit anything in my behalf. I desire nothing but through Him and with Him. I have no wish beyond Him. O God of mercy, I seek nothing but Thy love. Graciously accept of the sacrifice of my heart and of my whole self, and may it, like the sacrifice of Jesus, be pleasing to Thee and unite us to Him.

AT THE SECRET

MERCIFULLY hear our prayers, O Lord, and graciously accept this oblation which we Thy servants make to Thee; and as we offer it to the honor of Thy name, so may it be to us a means of obtaining Thy grace and life everlasting hereafter. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

AT THE PREFACE

LIFT up, O Lord, do Thou Thyself lift up my heart to Thee. Take from it all unholy thoughts, all earthly affections. Lift it wholly up to heaven, where Thou

art worthily adored, and to the altar, where Thou art about to manifest Thyself to me. My life is but one continual succession of Thy mercies, let it be one continual succession of thanksgivings; and as Thou art now about to renew the greatest of all sacrifices, is it not meet that I should burst forth in expressions of heartfelt gratitude? Suffer me, then, to join my feeble voice with the voices of all the heavenly spirits, and in union with them to say, in a transport of joy and admiration:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Saboath. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

AT THE CANON

O ETERNAL and most merciful Father, behold, we come to offer Thee our homage this day: we desire to adore, praise, and glorify Thee, and to give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, joining our hearts and

voices with all Thy blessed in heaven, and with Thy whole Church upon earth. But acknowledging our great unworthiness and innumerable sins, for which we are heartily sorry, and humbly beg Thy pardon, we dare not venture to approach Thee otherwise than in company of Thy Son, our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast given us to be both our High Priest and Sacrifice. With Him, therefore, and through Him, we venture to offer Thee this sacrifice: to His most sacred intentions we desire to unite ours: and with this offering which He makes of Himself, we desire to make an offering of our whole being to Thee. With Him, and through Him, we beseech Thee to exalt Thy holy Catholic Church throughout the whole world; to maintain her in peace, unity, holiness, and truth; to have mercy on Thy servant, N. our chief bishop, N. our prelate, and on all that truly fear Thee; on our pastor (parents, children), friends, and benefactors, etc.; on all whom we have in any way scandalized, injured, or offended, or for whom we

are in any other way bound to pray; on all that are in their agony, or under violent temptation, or other necessities, corporal or spiritual; on all our enemies; and, in a word, on all poor sinners; that we may all be converted to Thee, and find mercy through Jesus Christ Thy Son; through whom we hope one day to be admitted into the company of all Thy saints and elect, whose memory we here celebrate, whose prayers we desire, and with whom we communicate in these holy mysteries.

WHEN THE PRIEST SPREADS HIS HANDS OVER THE OBLATION

(Here the bell is rung.)

GIVE ear, we beseech Thee, to the prayers of Thy servant, who is here appointed to make this oblation in our behalf; and grant that it may be effectual for the obtaining of all those blessings which he asks for us.

Behold, O Lord, we all here present to Thee, in this bread and wine, the symbols of our perfect union. Grant, O Lord,

that they may be made for us the true Body and Blood of Thy dear Son; that, being consecrated to Thee by this holy Victim, we may live in Thy service, and depart this life in Thy grace.

AT THE CONSECRATION

Bow down your body and soul in solemn adoration; make an act of faith in the real presence of your Saviour's Body and Blood, soul and divinity, under the sacramental veil. Offer your whole life to Him, and through Him to His Father: beg that your heart and soul may be happily united to Him.

AT THE ELEVATION OF THE HOST

(Here the bell is rung thrice.)

HAIL, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary, which didst truly suffer and wast immolated on the cross for man, whose side was pierced, and flowed with water and with blood; may we have a foretaste of Thee in the last agony of death. O kind, O loving One, Jesus, Son of Mary, have mercy on me! Amen.

AT THE ELEVATION OF THE CHALICE

(Here also the bell is rung thrice.)

SAVIOUR of the world, save us; for by Thy cross and by Thy Blood Thou hast

redeemed us; help us, we beseech Thee, O our God. Amen.

Have mercy on me, dear Jesus, and grant that Thy Blood may not be shed in vain for me, I most humbly beseech Thee. Amen.

A PRAYER AFTER THE ELEVATION

Look down, O Lord, we beseech Thee, upon this sacred Victim which was once offered to Thee upon the cross, and is now daily offered to Thee. Remember that Thine only-begotten Son for us poor sinners was conceived and born into this world; that He suffered a bitter agony and sweat of blood; for us He was betrayed into the hands of sinners, buffeted, spit upon, and in many ways abused; for us He was scourged at a pillar, crowned with thorns, and nailed to a cross; for us He died and for us He triumphed over death by His resurrection, and He opened heaven for us by His ascension. We desire gratefully to commemorate all these mysteries this day, in the oblation of this

pure and holy sacrifice. Oh, look not on our sins, but on the infinite ransom paid for them. And whilst we offer it here below upon our altars, do Thou receive it upon Thine altar above, from the hands of the Angel of great Counsel, the eternal Priest; and from thence send down Thy blessing upon all of us who here below assist at Thy divine mysteries. Through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AT THE MEMENTO FOR THE DEAD

I OFFER Thee again, O Lord, this holy sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Thine only Son, on behalf of the faithful departed, and in particular for the souls of [here name whom you chiefly propose to pray for], my parents [if dead], relatives, benefactors, neighbors, etc. I offer it also for all whom I may have injured, or of whose sins I may have been the occasion; also for all who may have injured me, or who have been unfriendly toward me, and for all who have no friends to pray for

them. To these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

AT THE NOBIS QUOQUE PECCATORIBUS

VOUCHSAFE to grant mercy also to us poor and miserable sinners: judge us not according to our demerits; but through the infinite multitude of Thy mercies, in which we hope, liberally extend to us Thy grace and pardon.

We ask it of Thee in the name of Thy dear Son, who liveth and reigneth eternally with Thee, and in that form of prayer which He Himself hath taught us.

AT THE PATER NOSTER

OUR Father, who reignest in heaven, come and reign in my soul, come and sanctify it by Thy presence; come and subject it to Thy holy will, and render it obedient to the inspirations of Thy grace. Extinguish in my heart every feeling of

hatred and revenge: forgive me as I forgive. Grant to me such wisdom and such strength that I may triumph over all temptations. Deliver me from all these evils which oppress me, and under which I groan. Being burdened, I come to Thee, as a child to his father, for help; as a subject to his prince, to be protected; as one afflicted, to his only succor, to be consoled and comforted.

AT THE LIBERA NOS

DELIVER us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come: and by the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever virgin, and of all the saints, mercifully grant peace in our days, that by the assistance of Thy holy grace we may be always free from sin and secure from all disturbance.

AT THE PAX DOMINI

THY Body was pierced, and Thy Blood shed for us! Grant that the commemoration of this holy mystery may obtain for

us peace; and that those who receive it may find everlasting rest.

O Lamb of God, pure and spotless Victim, who only canst satisfy the justice of an offended God, vouchsafe to make me partaker of the merits of Thy sacrifice. What lessons of humility, meekness, charity, and patience dost Thou not give me! Impress these virtues upon my heart, that it may be to Thee a pleasant habitation, wherein Thou mayest repose as in an abode of peace.

AFTER THE AGNUS DEI

In saying to Thy apostles, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, Thou hast promised, O Lord, to all Thy Church, that peace which the world can not give—peace with Thee, and peace with ourselves.

Let nothing, O Lord, ever interrupt this holy peace; let nothing separate us from Thee, to whom we heartily desire to be united through the blessed sacrament of peace and reconciliation. Let this

Food of angels strengthen us in every Christian duty, so as never more to yield under temptation, or fall into our common weaknesses.

O my good God, and sweet Saviour Jesus, who art present here for my sake and givest Thyself to me for daily food, and for the supply of all my necessities; since without Thee, who art the true Food of my soul, I can not live, I humbly beseech Thee to refresh me spiritually, and make me partaker of that grace which they experience who devoutly receive Thee. O good Jesus, despise me not, but vouchsafe to visit Thy servant, and by Thy grace to work and perfect all the effects and virtues of Thy holy sacrament in me, to Thy honor, O my God, and the eternal salvation of my soul. Amen.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me; Body of Christ, save me; Blood of Christ, inebriate me; water out of the side of Christ, wash me; passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me; within Thy wounds hide me; suffer me not to be separated from Thee; defend me from the malig-

nant enemy; at the hour of my death call me, and bid me come unto Thee, that with Thy saints I may praise Thee for all eternity. Amen.

AT THE DOMINE, NON SUM DIGNUS

God only can be worthy of receiving God; how, then, can a soul so sinful as mine merit so great a happiness! But Thou, O Lord, regardest not Thy greatness, but Thy mercy. Thou willest that I come to Thee, as one sick to the physician who can heal him, as one poor to the rich lord who can assist him. O God of love, behold at Thy feet the poorest, the most infirm of Thy creatures. Unite me to Thyself, and I shall become rich and whole in Thy sight. Work, I beseech Thee, this miracle, worthy of Thy omnipotence and charity.

WHILE THE PRIEST COMMUNICATES

O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us!

Grant, O Lord Jesus, that we may so reverence the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever find in ourselves the fruits of Thy redemption. Amen.

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT COMMUNICATE

O MY most loving Saviour, since I can not have the happiness of receiving Thee this day, suffer me to gather up the precious crumbs that fall from Thy table, and to unite myself to Thy divine Heart by faith, hope, and charity. I confess I do not deserve the children's bread; but I venture humbly to declare that, away from Thee, my soul is dried up with thirst, and my heart cast down with faintness. Come, then, into me, O my divine Jesus! come into my mind, to illuminate it with Thy light; come into my heart, to enkindle in it the fire of Thy love, and to unite it so intimately with Thy own, that it may be no more I that live, but Thou that livest in me, and reignest in me forever.

PRAYER DURING THE ABLUTIONS

GRANT us, O Lord, a part in the fruits of Thy death and passion, the sacred memory of which we have this day commemorated. I adore Thy goodness, O gracious Lord, for Thy inestimable favor in admitting me to be present again at that holy sacrifice where Thou art both Priest and Victim. Oh, make me always sensible of so great a blessing, and let not my unworthiness put a bar to Thy mercy and goodness.

AT THE COMMUNION

LET it be now, O Lord, the effect of Thy mercy, that we, who have been present at this holy mystery, may find the benefit of it in our souls.

Oh, how sweet, Lord, is Thy Spirit, Who, to show Thy sweetness toward Thy children, givest them the most delicious bread from heaven, and sendest the proud away empty.

AT THE POST COMMUNION

POUR forth upon us, O Lord, the Spirit of Thy love, that, by Thy mercy, Thou

mayest make those of one mind whom Thou hast fed with one celestial food. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, etc.

We give Thee thanks, O God, for Thy mercy in admitting us to have a part in offering this sacrifice to Thy holy name: accept it now to Thy glory, and be ever mindful of our weakness.

AT THE LAST GOSPEL

O ETERNAL Word, speak to my soul, which adores Thee in profound silence; Thou who art the great Creator of all things, abandon not, I beseech Thee, Thy own creature; be Thou my life, my light, and my all.

O Light eternal, enlighten me as to this present life and in the life to come.

Reign in me as in Thine own inheritance; for Thou, O Lord, hast made me; Thou hast redeemed me. May I be ever Thine!

Prayers ordered to be said, kneeling, at the end of every Low Mass, by a decree of His Holiness Leo XIII:

The priest with the people recites the *Hail Mary* thrice; then the *Salve Regina* (as on page 132).

Let us pray

O God, our refuge and our strength, look down with favor upon Thy people, who cry to Thee; and through the intercession of the glorious and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of her spouse, blessed Joseph, of Thy holy apostles, Peter and Paul, and all the saints, mercifully and graciously hear the prayers which we pour forth to Thee for the conversion of sinners and the liberty and exaltation of Holy Mother Church. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Add the Invocation: St. Michael the archangel, defend us in battle; be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. We humbly beseech God to command him; and do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the divine power thrust into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who roam through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen. (300 *days' Indulgence.*)

Invocation.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us! (*Three times.*)

Indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines.—Pope Pius X, June 7, 1904.

Prayers for Confession

BEFORE CONFESSION

O MY God, although I have been so ungrateful to Thee in times past, yet now I beseech Thee to accept me, returning to Thee with an earnest desire to repent, and to devote myself to Thee, my Lord and my God, and to praise Thy holy name forever.

Grant me, I beseech Thee, perfect contrition for my sins, that I may detest them with the deepest sorrow of heart. Send forth Thy light into my soul, and discover to me all those sins which I ought to confess at this time. Assist me by Thy grace, that I may be able to declare them to the priest, fully, humbly, and with a contrite heart, and so obtain perfect remission of them all through Thine infinite goodness. Amen.

Here examine your conscience.

ACTS OF CONTRITION

O MY God! I am very sorry that I have offended Thee, because Thou art so good; and I will not sin again.

My Lord and my God, I sincerely acknowledge myself a vile and wretched sinner, unworthy to

appear in Thy presence; but do Thou have mercy on me, and save me.

Most loving Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am unworthy to be called Thy child; make me as one of Thy servants, and may I for the future be ever faithful to Thee. I am now resolved, with the help of Thy grace, to be more watchful over myself, to amend my faults and fulfil Thy law. Look down on me with the eyes of mercy, O God, and blot out my sins.

Say the Our Father and the Hail Mary.

AFTER CONFESSION

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, Who, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, hast been pleased once more to receive me, after so many times going astray from Thee, and to admit me to this sacrament of forgiveness: I give Thee thanks with all the powers of my soul for this and all other mercies, graces, and blessings bestowed on me; and casting myself at Thy sacred feet, I offer myself to be henceforth forever Thine. Let nothing in life or death ever separate me from Thee. I renounce with my whole soul all the sins of my past life. I renew my promises made in baptism, and from this moment I give myself eternally to Thy love and service. Grant that for the time to come I may hate sin more than death itself, and avoid all such occasions and company as have unhappily brought me to it.

Now say your penance.

Prayers for Holy Communion

BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer for Help.—O my God, help me to make a good Communion. Mary, my dearest Mother, pray to Jesus for me. My dear Angel Guardian, lead me to the altar of God.

Act of Faith.—O God, because Thou hast said it, I believe that I shall receive the sacred body of Jesus Christ to eat, and His precious blood to drink. My God, I believe this with all my heart.

Act of Humility.—My God, I confess that I am a poor sinner; I am not worthy to receive the body and blood of Jesus on account of my sins. Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed.

Act of Sorrow.—My God, I detest all the sins of my life. I am sorry for them, because they have offended Thee, my God, who art so good. I resolve never to commit sin any more. My good God, pity me, have mercy on me, forgive me. Amen.

Act of Adoration.—O Jesus, great God, present on the altar, I bow down before Thee, I adore Thee.

Act of Love and Desire.—Sweet Jesus, I love Thee. I desire with all my heart to receive Thee. Most sweet Jesus, come into my poor soul, and give me Thy flesh to eat and Thy blood to drink. Give me Thy whole self, body, blood, soul, and divinity, that I may live forever with Thee.

AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Act of Faith.—O Jesus, I believe that I have received Thy flesh to eat and Thy blood to drink, because Thou hast said it, and Thy word is true.

Act of Adoration.—O Jesus, my God, my Creator, I adore Thee, because from Thy hands I came, and with Thee I am to be happy forever.

Act of Humility.—O Jesus, I am but dust and ashes, and yet Thou hast come to me, and my poor heart may speak to Thee.

Act of Love.—Sweet Jesus, I love Thee; I love Thee with all my heart. Thou knowest that I love Thee, and wish to love Thee daily more and more.

Act of Thanksgiving.—My good Jesus, I thank Thee with all my heart. How good, how kind Thou art to me, sweet Jesus! Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Act of Offering.—O Jesus, receive my poor offering. Jesus, Thou hast given Thyself to me, and now let me give myself to Thee.

Sweet Jesus, I am going away for a time, but I trust not without Thee. Thou art with me by Thy grace. I will never leave Thee by mortal sin. I do not fear to do so, though I am so weak, because I have such hope in Thee. Give me grace to persevere. Amen.

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